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S E L E C T
S E R M O N S

On the following SUBJECTS,

The love of GOD.		The Sabbath.
The love of our neigh-		Chastity.
bour.		Drunkenness.
Swearing and Perjury.		Death. 3 Sermon.

AND

A SERMON at the FUNERAL of the
Honourable ROBERT BOYLE.

BY

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sity of *Glasgow*, afterwards Bishop of *Sarum*.

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THE
MUSEUM

On the following subjects

The life of George
the first of Great Britain
and the first of Great Britain
the first of Great Britain



ALBERT BURNETT

Some of the most interesting
of the most interesting

by Robert Brown
in the College
and the other

S E R M O N I.

Of the love of GOD.

MATH. XXII. 35, 36, 37, 38.

*Then one of them which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,**Master, which is the great commandment in the law ?**Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.**This is the first and great commandment.*

THE Jews had a notion among them, that if any man should choose any one precept of their law, and observe it steadily thro' the whole course of his life, that

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this

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this would stand him in such stead in the sight of God, that it would compensate for all his sins and failings. Pursuant to this, it might be a custom among them, to ask their Rabbies, which of all the commandments they should choose? So one of their lawyers, that is, one who studied to understand and expound their law; which rather answers to the notion of a divine, than a lawyer among us, came to try our Saviour with this question; reckoning that from his answer, he would be able to make a true judgment concerning him; asking him *which was the great commandment in the law?* Probably if this had been put to the Jewish Rabbins, one would have said the observation of the sabbath, another, the law of sacrifices; another, the observing the festivities, going up to *Jerusalem* at every return of them, and another might give it for the laws of tything, or of their purifications; such might probably have been their answers.

OUR Saviour in his answer, goes to that which is the root and spring of every thing that a man thinks or does, which is a strong commanding love; when it possesses all his powers and faculties. When that is directed to God, and fixes on him, then religion has a true root in that man, and out of so noble a principle, all the acts of religion and vertue will naturally flow. Whereas all outward actions and observances without this, even those of the best sort, are as nothing in the sight of God, and are only the effects of temper, interest, humour or custom,

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custom, but are not acceptable to God, but as they rise from true love to him; and by that they are all sanctified, and become acceptable to him.

THIS was a precept in the law of Moses, set out with a special solemnity, with this particular character, that from thence the laws given on mount Sinai, would be in their heart, and and that they would teach them diligently to their children. *Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might: And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.* For love is the source of all our actions, and the spring of a true and filial obedience.

It seems some good Jews understood this matter right; if the lawyer that tempted Christ with the question, (*What shall I do to inherit eternal life?*) came not to him after this answer that he had given, having heard of it. So when Christ asked him, *What is written in the law? How readeft thou?* He answering said, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thy self.* The question and answer in my text, is

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also

(Deut. 6. 4, 5, 6. Luke 10. 25. Mark 12. 28.

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also set forth by St. *Mark*. In it our Saviour begins with the preface set down in *Deuteronomy*, and he adds to the words here set down, *with all thy strength*, as it is in the Hebrew ; and he concludes, that *there is none other commandment greater than these* ; which drew from the scribe this acknowledgment, *Well, Master, thou hast said the truth ; for there is one God, and there is none other but he : And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices*. Upon which, our Saviour declared, *he was not far from the kingdom of God*. Since a man convinced of this, was well prepared to become his disciple. Our Saviour also adds in my text, that the whole design of the religion revealed to them, turned upon this ; expressed by the figure of a tent, that hung all upon one great nail ; *on this hang all the law and the prophets* ; which imports their whole bible ; and it may well be turned in our stile, to this of the old and new testament ; for indeed this is the soul and life of all religion, which without this, as the body without the soul, is dead.

THE various words of *heart, soul, mind, and strength*, may either be understood as different ways of expressing the same thing, in such a copious manner as may make us apprehend how entirely we ought to love God ; or if we will
apply

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apply them specially to our faculties and powers; by heart is to be understood our affections; so *all our heart*, imports our utmost zeal and warmth in the love of God. *All our soul* imports the study and contrivance of all our faculties; *all our mind*, imports our apprehensions and understandings being full of the impressions of the goodness of God; and *all our strength*, which is added in the other gospels, imports our application and activity in promoting every thing to which this love may prompt us.

BUT whatever may be in this, let us now consider what the love of God imports. If any of you were asked whether you love God, or the Lord Jesus Christ, or not? you would think the very doubting of it, was a hard imputation cast on you; and would be apt to say, *If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be accursed.* Let us therefore consider more narrowly what love is.

IT is a sense of the goodness of a person, which endears him to us, and engages us to him. So the sense of the goodness of God, is the true motive of our true love to him. We are struck with wonder, and adore and worship him, when we consider God in his glorious attributes, and our selves with all things else, as the work of his hands; but it is the sense of his goodness to us, that commands our love. So, in order to the raising and heightning this love in us, we ought to contemplate all the In-

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stances in which God's goodness to us does appear ; and review these often, that from thence a proper return of love may be formed in us.

IN order to this, we ought often to consider God's goodness to mankind in the whole creation ; more particularly in the light and heat of the sun, and in the use that the moon and stars are to us. We ought to view the riches of this earth, that is full of every thing that is either necessary, or useful, and beautiful, to delight as well as to support us. He has made proper objects to entertain all our senses, and has put a variety of medicinal virtues in many different parts of this earth, and has planted in man a capacity of searching for these, and of finding them out ; and of inventing and perfecting so many useful pieces of mechanism, both to subdue and govern the creation.

FROM this view of God's goodness to us, as he is our maker, and has given us bodies curiously formed, and capable of much pain and pleasure ; a man who would keep alive this flame of love within him, goes on to consider God's goodness in nobler instances. He has given us minds capable of thought and knowledge, with that great store-house of memory that retains the impressions of what is past, and is a magazine for wisdom, and reflection. He has also furnished us with the power of speech, by which we entertain a lively commerce with others, and can both instruct them, and be instructed by them ; and by the invention of letters,

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ters, can hold a correspondence at the greatest distance, and transmit all we know, to many ages to come. God has planted in our nature, a sense of good, and evil, of happiness, and misery; with a capacity of reflecting on our selves, on our present state, and the probability of a future; and has planted in us such a tenderness of nature, as gives us remorse for what we do amiss, with a joy when we do well; and by these, as so many steps, leads us up to contemplate himself the author of our being.

ANOTHER view of God's goodness appears in his providence, in giving rain, and fruitful seasons, clear air, and pure elements, free from noisome mixtures, and in the happy turns that are often very visible in the conduct of Nations, with great blessings on the better part of mankind, and signal judgments on the bad.

FROM all these, a man that loves to dwell on such inflaming thoughts, turns to take such a view as the gospel gives us of God's love to mankind in Christ Jesus, whom he sent into the world, and delivered up to a state of poverty and contempt; and in conclusion, to most inexpressible sufferings, that he might give his life to be a ransom for all that should come unto God thro' him. And that the evidence and truth of this was made out by so many undeniable miracles, wrought openly in the sight of many thousands; most of whom were his implacable enemies: But chiefly by his resurrection; after which, he was often seen by his
disciples,

disciples, and by five hundred at once ; he was seen ascend up to heaven by many, but the concluding evidence was the greatest of all, when that wonderful effusion of the Holy Ghost promised by Christ, did both inflame his disciples with zeal to publish this gospel, and furnish them with the power of miracles, the gift of tongues, and with every thing else that was necessary to give authority and success to their labours.

WHEN a man considers all the parts of this gospel, the fulness and freedom of the pardon it offers, the reasonableness of the conditions on which it is proposed, the large inward supplies promised to assist us in bearing this yoke ; the protection of providence, and the ministry of angels, of which we are assured ; the simplicity of the worship enjoined, the few, the easie and expressive rites that are prescribed to us ; the laws it sets us, that are all holy, just and good, equally conducing to make every man happy, as he is a single individual by himself, and to make all mankind safe and happy in one another. When our sincere endeavours, tho' very defective, are accepted of God, as if our obedience were perfect ; and when to all this, we add the consideration of an unspeakable reward, and a weight of glory that is abiding us in an endless and unchangeable state : When I say, a man lays all this together, he is forced to cry out, *Here is*

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Love indeed! How excellent is thy loving kindness! Oh how great is thy goodness! By such meditations as these, while a man is musing on them, he will feel this fire burn within him.

FROM these more general characters of God's love, more common to the rest of mankind, he will carry his thoughts to what is more particular to the age and nation he lives in. He rejoices in those blessings which are common to many about him, and in which he himself has a much larger share than he deserves, or could have expected. He will often look back thro' the whole course of his life, to reckon up God's blessings to himself. If he has a perfect and healthy body, lively senses, a quick apprehension, a happy memory, with a sound judgment; the seeds of all these being brought with him into the world, he looks on them as the effects of the goodness of his Creator.

ALL the distinctions in his education and youth, the good examples he may have seen, and the good instruction he may have received, the concurrence of any happy circumstances in the course of his life, especially at his first setting out, while he was too apt to receive ill impressions; these will be often called up by him, to *stir him, and all that is within him*, all his powers and capacities, to *bless* the holy name of God, and to *forget none of all his blessings*. The many *sins that are forgiven him, will make him to love much*. The many

Temp-

Pf. 36. 7. Zech. 9. 17. Pf. 102. 1, 2. Lu. 7. 47.

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Temptations he has been preserv'd from, the many dangers out of which he has been rescued, the many awakenings of conscience, and alarms of the wrath to come, with many happy motions and quicknings, both to see and to do his duty, and the blessed beginnings of a better and truer sense of things in his mind, are of all others, the clearest evidences to him of God's love and goodness to him; for these are to him the sure earnest of that fulness of joy to which he aspires.

THESE are the views of the goodness of God, that if much dwelt on, and seriously considered, must needs fill a man's heart with love and joy. If we say we love God for himself, we say we know not what; we adore him for the glory of his nature, and the greatness of his attributes, with the amazing brightness of the heavenly hosts; but he is the object of our love, as he is good, and does us good. Here then the foundation of our love is to be laid deep and strong within us, by dwelling often on those meditations, that set before us, *how excellent is his name in all the earth?*

Love being thus set on a sure bottom, it will transform us into the likeness of him whom we love. This effect follows every degree of love; it is of an assimilating nature, and makes every person take some measure of likeness from the person he loves. If then we love God with such an entireness of love as is set forth in our

Saviour's

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Saviour's words, it will change us into his likeness; it will so work on us, that all our angry and boisterous passions will be worn out of our natures; we will feel neither envy nor hatred giving us any disturbance; the ill-behaviour of others towards us, will move us only to pity them, to pray for them, and to *overcome their evil with our good*; we will feel the tenderness of compassion, and the bowels of humanity, give us a sensible concern for all men, especially those that are in misery; but most of all for those that seem to be in a sure way to be forever miserable. Here there is a certain distinguishing character between that zeal in the matters of religion, that arises from the love of God, and that which springs from a worse principle; the one pities the person, how much soever the error is hated; whereas the other hates the person as much, if not more, than the error, and seeks his ruin more than his reformation.

HERE then is the sure inward proof of our loving God, if we become truly like him, in an universal love and goodness to all his creation. Every man that will look into his own temper, will soon be able to discern, whether the *love of God is so shed abroad in his heart*, as to transform him into the like image.

NEXT to this, which can only be known to God, and may be known to every man that will search his own heart; the outward, the certain

certain and the indispenfable consequent of this love is, that it will make fuch as are filled with it, *keep his commandments*. This, as it is joyn'd to this love in the 2d commandment, fo it is repeated in many other places in the old testament; which our Saviour reinforced, when he said, *if ye love me, keep my commandments*. Where ever there is any degree of love, it difpofes the person to avoid difpleasing, and to study to please the person beloved. If then the love of God dwells richly in us, it will engage us to a constant obedience to all his laws, it will be to us *as our meat to do his will*; we will abhor every thing that is forbid us by him, we will avoid every approach to it at the greatest distance, *hating even the garment spotted by the flesh*; that is, all commerce with sin or the appearance of it.

AMONG men, it would pass for a high strain of impudence, if any one should make expressions of love to a man whom he was every day offending deliberately; chiefly if he persisted in a course that was highly injurious and provoking to him; what then can be said of our pretensions to love God, when we go on in a course of sin? Our professions may pass upon men, while by a dextrous managment we conceal what would provoke them, if they knew it; but God knows all things; so it is a vain as well as a wicked conceit to fancy he will be pleas'd with our *drawing near to him with*

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John 14. 15. John 4. 34. Jude 23.

Of the love of GOD. 13

our lips, with the shews of love, when our hearts are far from him.

THIS of keeping his commandments, is inseparable from the love of God; but by this we are only to understand a constant uniform and sincere endeavour to keep all his commandments; tho' it is not at all times free from failings and stumblings.

IF we truly love God, the sense of every sin we are at any time carried to, will so pierce our hearts, that we will blush and be ashamed when we lift up our Eyes to God, reflecting on our unworthiness with a deep contrition, and a confusion of face. It is true, *there is no fear in love, perfect love casts out fear*; so he who has a true sense of the love of God in his heart, when he sees how he has offended him; he has not indeed the dread of God as a judge that will condemn him, but smites on his breast, confounded when he thinks how he has offended a kind and loving father; and this ingenuous temper will humble him yet more than even the agonies that the terrors of wrath might before raise in him.

ANOTHER instance of our love to God, will be a zeal to advance his glory, with a sensible concern for all the dishonour that we see or hear is done to him; the common effect of love among men, is that it gives a friend a sensible concern if his friend is ill spoken of; he will defend him all he can, and will endeavour

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deavour to possess others with the same good thoughts that he himself entertains of him. If this passes for a common piece of justice in the most general and coldest friendships that men contract, can you pretend to love God, and yet see him dishonoured, without a wound at heart upon it; or can you perhaps laugh at it, because it may be seasoned with somewhat that is lively; or which is worse, can you be even pleased with it, because done by one of a contrary party, and of those whom you account your enemies? *David's* behaviour was far contrary to this, *rivers of waters ran down his eyes, because his enemies kept not the laws of God.* When we truly love God, we will study all we can to make others love him. We will, as oft as we have opportunity, and can do it without affectation, or seeming to assume too much to ourselves, be speaking of the goodness of God to others; that we may become the happy instruments of deriving unto them the same love that fills our own hearts.

THIS ought to be chiefly to those whom God in his providence has put under our care; such as children, friends, and servants; and more particularly we, who are immediately dedicated to the service of God, ought to abound in this labour of love. We ought to publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and to tell of all the wonders of his love, what he has done for our souls, and so to provoke others *unto love, and*

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to good works. And no pleasure will be more sensible to us, than when we find God honours us to be instruments of advancing his glory, and of gaining souls to him ; rescuing them from a state of darkness and sin, and bringing them to a true sense and right principles in the matters of religion.

In a word, if a grateful man, who owes life and fortune to the bounty of a generous man, makes it the chief study and business of his life, to contrive how to make proper returns ; and at least, if he can do no more, to celebrate that bounty and goodness to which he owes so much ; how much ought we, who owe infinitely more to the goodness of God, than it is possible for one mortal to owe another, apply our thoughts, and imploy our time in this study, *What shall I render unto God for all his benefits ?*

In the last place, those who love to any high degree, long to see one another, to be much together, and if possible, never to separate. Did this love of God overcome us to any degree, we would feel our thoughts ever carrying us to look up to him, and to rejoice in his *loving kindness, which is better than life.* This would raise in us pantings and longings after that blessed state, in which we shall see him as he is, be made like unto him, and be ever with him ; never to offend him any more, but to love him perfectly, and to feel ourselves un-

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speakably

Psalms 116. 12. Psal. 63. 3, 1 John 3. 2.

speakably happy, in being eternally beloved by him.

WHERE this love reigns, the terrors of death do not only vanish, but they are so entirely turned to have another face, that such persons have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; they do often groan earnestly that *this their house may be dissolved*, that they may be clothed with *the house which is in heaven*. And tho' the way to that happy state, should lie thro' many tribulations, yet they enter upon it with joy, knowing that what is called death, is indeed the path of life; and if their sufferings should seem ever so extreme to flesh and blood, yet they will reckon these to be but *light afflictions*, and for a moment, especially when they consider, *that they work for them a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. While they look not at things that are seen, and are temporal, but at things that are not seen, and are eternal. He who truly loves God, must long to see him, and to be for ever with him; for while we are in the body, *we are absent from the Lord*. Such persons who are looking for and hasting to the coming of the Lord, will while they feel the approaches and summons of death, come towards them, *lift up their heads and rejoice, because their redemption draws near*; for they know that *neither death nor life*

Phil. 1. 23. 2 Cor. 5. 2, 2 Cor. 4. 18.
Rom. 8. 37.

Of the love of GOD. 17

life can separate them from the love of God that is in Christ.

God grant we may perceive all these characters in our selves, that by them we may know that the *love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by his holy spirit.* To God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, for ever, *Amen.*

S E R M O N II.

Of the Love of our Neighbour.

MATTH. XXII. 39, 40.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self; On these two commandments, hang all the law and the prophets.

TH E first and main principles of arts and sciences, are most valuable on this account; because when we are masters of them, they lead unto many things that are readily drawn from them; and these render the other parts of those arts and sciences easie in practice, So with relation to our duty to God. if we have such a sense of his attributes and perfections, and more particularly of his goodness and mercy, and such a sense of those blessings that we have received, and still do hope for from him, as makes us *love him with all our soul, and with all our strength*; then every act that terminates

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terminates on him, our trust, our hope, our resignation and submission, and every part of the worship or service that we offer to him, will rise easily, and come from us with joy and delight; and therefore this is the first and great commandment.

THE second is like unto it, both in its importance, and in the effects it will have; if our natures are brought to a temper that is all love and goodness, then we become like *God, who is love*; and if our souls dwell in love, then we dwell in God, and God dwells in us. This principle will be also fruitful of every good work; it will make us pay the duties of all the relations we stand in very readily; and because *love worketh no ill to his neighbour*, therefore it is the *fulfilling of the law*, for it is *all comprehended and fulfilled in this one word*, love will prompt us to a chearful and ready performing of every office, whether of justice, or charity, that we owe our neighbour.

ALL the best things we do, when without this inward principle, are either done hypocritically, to be seen of men, or at best they are forced things, that some other considerations draw from us; but they cannot arise naturally, or with joy, but as they flow from love. Without love, a narrowness of soul will shut us up within our selves, and make all we do to others, only as a sort of merchandize trading for our own advantage; it is love only that opens

Rom. 13. 8, 9, 10. Gal. 5. 14.

Of the love of our Neighbour. 21.

opens our souls to consider other persons, and to love them on their own account, or rather on the account of God, who is love.

THIS precept was a part of the law of *Moses*, *thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him*. If we see any person in a state of sin, to whom we have such access, that we may reprove him for it, but are willing to let him continue in it, that so he may be thereby lessened in the esteem of the world, we shew a high degree of hatred, if upon any such account, we let him go on in an ill course, the sin in some sort will lie on us; and so the words may be rendered, *Thou shalt not bear sin for him*. To this is added, *Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people*. The one relates to the desire, and the other to the acts of revenge; *but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self, I am the Lord*. This gives a particular weight to the precept.

THE word *neighbour*, was by the *Jews* explained by the other, *the children of thy people*. So they who were commanded to avoid all intimacy or society with Idolaters, thought that by *neighbour*, none but an *Israelite* could be meant, all others were counted by them strangers, and enemies. Our Saviour, as he carried the moral obligations much higher, and gave them a greater extent than the *Jews* did; so by the
parable

parable of the *Samaritan*, he shewed that the word *neighbour* was not to be narrowed as they had understood it, to the men of one nation, or of one religion; but that a proper object of what nation or religion soever being brought in our way, that ought to make us pay this debt of love to him, so that *neighbourhood* does now comprehend all mankind.

OUR Saviour does not only raise the value of such love, both by calling it *a new commandment* which he gave his disciples, and by making it such a badge and cognisance, that *all men might know whether they were his disciples or not, if they had love one to another*. He has also raised the obligation yet higher, by the standard he has given of our love to the brethren; *as I have loved you, so love one another*. When we consider the extent of that, *as I have loved you*, both in the infinite dignity of him that so loved us, and in the unworthiness of us whom he has so loved; and in the wonderfull instances, as well as in the endearing effects of his love, *who gave himself for us, and bore our sins on his own body*; that so he might redeem and deliver us, and reconcile us to his father; we must acknowledge that *there is love indeed*, and a perfect pattern proposed to our imitation. He has made all mankind our *neighbours*, and all christians our *brethren*, whom we ought to love with a pure heart fervently.

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Luke 10. 29. John 13. 35. John 15. 12.

Of the love of our Neighbour. 23

WE ought to exclude none from our love, but some have a right to a higher measure of it, such in whom we see the image of God, ought to carry away the largest share of it, according to the degrees of that image that we perceive in them.

THE only difficulty to be cleared, is concerning the importance of the words, *as our selves*. It seems hard, and almost above the power of man, if not contrary to the law of nature, to love any other person, much more to love all our neighbours as our selves. Nature seems to have a principle of self-love stamp'd so deep upon it, that it looks like a stretch beyond our force, to love another *as our selves*. But as does not always import an equality, an imitation or resemblance will fully answer its signification; we are required to be *holy, as he who called us was holy, in all manner of conversation*, and to purify our selves, *even as he is pure*. And our Saviour said, *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*. Now since we cannot rise up in holiness and purity to an equality with Christ, much less can we ever be *perfect, as God is perfect*, we see the meaning of *as* in those places is only a conformity. The proposing God and Christ to our imitation, as the pattern after which we ought to frame our thoughts and actions; so here the meaning of *loving our neighbours as our selves* is, that as

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1 Pet. 1. 15. 1 John 3. 3. Mat. 5. 48.

we feel nature teaches us to love ourselves with so much tenderness and care, so much industry and zeal, to have so quick a sense of all our concerns, and so much solicitude about every thing that relates to us, so we ought to love our neighbour with a sincere and hearty affection, bearing a share of all his burthens, and imploying our selves with an active diligence to procure his real good and happiness; with a love of the same sort at least with that which we bear our selves, tho' it rise not up to the same degrees. And in a word, the doing to all others, what we would have others do to us.

THIS is what we owe at all times, and to all men, as God in his providence puts them in our way, and makes them our neighbours, by putting them within our reach; but at some times, and on some occasions we are called to love them in a stricter sense, *as our selves*, nay even with a preference to our selves. We are commanded to be kindly affectioned one to another, *in honour preferring one another*; we ought to esteem others better than our selves, and look at the things of others, and to be ready when the circumstances of providence call us to it, to lay down our lives for the good of others. For tho' it is an extravagant stretch, neither required of us, nor indeed in our power to be willing to be damned for the sake of others, or for the promoting of God's glory; yet as some
generous

Of the love of our Neighbour. 25

generous minds have out of love to their country, or their friends, sacrificed their own lives for the good of others; so this brotherly love, when raised to some higher degrees than are indeed ordinary among those who are called christians, did often in the first ages of christianity, engage true christians to offer themselves even to the most exquisite torments for the sake of others; but as this is not the daily lot of christians to be called to suffer for the faith, so there are not many instances even in times of persecution, in which men are called to this heroical act of charity, and the venturing on it, unless one is persuaded that he is called to it by the circumstances of providence, is a piece of presumption, and a tempting of God.

THUS it appears what is meant by our loving our neighbour *as our selves*. It is in the next place necessary to examine what are the several acts and instances, in which this our love ought to exert itself. But to animate us to a zeal in every one of these, let us consider our obligations to this mutual love one of another.

AMONG men, those of the same tribe, and kindred, household, and family, reckon themselves under special ties to love one another. We are all brethren, derived from one common original; our bodies are all of the same mould, our souls come from the common father of spirits, and fountain of life; we all partake of one common nature, and under whatsoever distinctions we happen to be born, we are all
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upon

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upon the level as to every thing that is essential to us. We ought to despise none as below us, because of the depression of their fortune ; those accidental things come and go by such secret springs, and often upon such an unaccountable ground, that we ought never to measure or value our selves by any thing, but that which is unseparable from us, or which belongs to us, so that we may call it our own. We are neither the better nor the worse either for having or for not having them, but may be much the better or the worse, as we make a good or bad use of them. We ought then to consider ourselves as the partakers of the same being with all others, and therefore to bear a share with all the partners of our nature in their common concerns, and to love them as parts of our selves.

No figure is more common in all authors, as well as in the scriptures, than the comparing the societies of men to a body, and every individual to a member of the body : As then every member that has not a common feeling of the concerns of the whole, and a proper activity to serve the whole, is a dead paralytick member ; so every man that has not common humanity, bowels and compassion, has lost one of the best ingredients of his composition, and is in a fair way to become either stupid, or savage.

A SECOND reason for this mutual tenderness that it is the common interest of all mankind, that it should prevail universally ; and
whensoever

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whensoever the common inclinations of mankind meet with their common interest, that may well be reckoned the voice and law of nature. Man is a necessitous and helpless creature, he wants assistances of different sorts, from men of different sizes. God has also given men different talents, capacities, and inclinations, that so they may be useful to one another. No man is of such an exalted condition, that he does not want, or at least may not want the assistance of those that are far below him. There must be a circulation of mutual advices, advertisements and assistances, and nothing opens this so much, and makes it run about so freely as love. It both commands those in whom it works, and by a happy infection, it spreads and insinuates itself into others, and melts them likewise, engaging them to make such returns as are in their power. A man that is governed by love, feels that as it subdues himself, so he by it subdues those among whom he lives. Some are perhaps too savage to be capable of being tamed; but making some allowances for a few exceptions, generally speaking, men are so made, that they who can resist fear and force, cannot stand before love. A man who lets himself out into the labour of love, has a secret confidence in himself, that it shall return upon him, one way or another; perhaps not from the very same persons from whom he might with the best title expect it, but a return will come from one hand or another. One may in general depend

not only on the providence of God, but even on the equity and good nature of Mankind.

A THIRD reason that recommends love is, that God who by all his goodness to us, has such a right to our love, exacts our loving our brethren and neighbours, as the most acceptable expression of our love to him. We can add nothing to his glory, and have nothing to offer to him, but what we receive of him ; yet as among men, if a benefactor is far above returns ; yet as soon as it is known what will be best accepted by him ; this will engage every grateful mind to express a just sense of favours, that can never be re-paid : Acknowledgments are in that case held as a re-payment. *David* under the tenderest impressions of the goodness of God, and of the insufficiency of the returns he could make, which could never extend to God, knew where to apply his gratitude, even to *the excellent ones, to the saints, in whom was all his delight* ; he did both delight in them, and in doing good to them.

God hath made a capacity to love, one of the peculiar excellencies of our nature, as well as a main part of his image on us ; and as we feel a noble enlargement and extent of soul come upon us, as we are opened to a large and diffusive love to others, so we feel ourselves become insensibly perfecter and happier creatures, the more entirely we love others, and are beloved by them. The extravagant follies that
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are owing to the excesses and irregularities of love do not contradict this ; unsuitable objects, and ill-conduct, with cross accidents, may create much trouble ; but as excessive study, which is the awakening of reason, the radical excellence of our nature, may drive a man to madness, so every thing by error and vice may be so corrupted, that the best things in us may become the worst ; such is our reason, when applied to support fraud and impiety. So the wrong turn that is given to this principle of love that is planted in us, does not destroy this great truth, that man by nature was made to love, and was to be happy by loving, and by being beloved.

IN the last place, let us consider the obligation to love that the christian religion puts us under. We have already observ'd in how effectual a manner our Saviour has recommended it to us, and what an unimitable pattern he has set us ; with what earnestness does he set himself to beat down that which does most eminently bear it down, even the sense of injuries, and all resentments arising from them ? He has taught us to pray for forgiveness, only as we forgive others : he enlarges in repeated expressions on that clause of the short prayer he taught his disciples, to make the sense of it go the deeper into them. His apostles enlarge upon none of the christian duties more frequently, and in expressions that are more sublime, as

well as more tender, than when they treat of this. *St. Paul* does it copiously in the 12th and 13th chapter to the *Romans*. But in none of his writings does he seem to be carried away as in a transport more visibly than in the 13th chapter of his first epistle to the *Corinthians*. After a long discourse on the different gifts and powers that were more commonly poured out at that time, which had prevailed so far on human infirmity, that some were lifted up by reason of them, after he had shew'd how unreasonable such an abuse of those gifts was, he leads them to a more excellent way, and shews them that charity which is to continue always in the church militant below, as well as in the triumphant above, is preferable to the gifts of tongues, healing, miracles, and the understanding all mysteries, and even to the perfectest and brightest of all our actions, such as our giving our bodies to be burnt, the highest proof of our faith, and the giving all our goods to the poor; yet even that, tho' a noble act of charity, if it flows not from an inward principle of love, it is but like the musick of an instrument, which how sweet soever it may be to the ear of another, yet has no musick in itself. Charity is not only prefer'd to all these, but even to faith and hope, as that which is the utmost perfection of our souls, in the highest state to which we can possibly be advanced. Many such strains, tho' not with an equal sublimity, occur often in his other epistles.

St.

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ST. John had the peculiar honour of being known by the distinction of *the beloved disciple* ; so one effect of this appears in that melting and tender strain, in which he recommends love and charity to all others ; which, when his strength failed as to other exhortations, still remain'd with him ; it being recorded of him, that to the last under all decays of nature, he continued still to exhort his disciples, or *little children to love one another*.

THESE are motives of so prevailing a nature, that it is not possible to reflect much on them, and not feel their power and efficacy. It is proper in the next place to examine, what are the acts and instances in which love does and must exert itself, for we must not love in word but in deed.

THE root of all lies in an inward concern and tenderness for other persons ; by which we feel bowels and compassions move within us towards them. When we rejoice in the good that happens to them, and are touch'd with the miseries that they feel ; when particularly we are grieved at the sins they commit, and can mourn for those : And if at any time we let ourselves rejoice at the calamities that befall them, it is not from any ill-will to them, but from a joy that some instance of the providence of God appears which may have a good effect on the world, and even on those who suffer under it, but may be awaken'd by it to a better sense of things. Love in the heart checks every

very secret repining at happy providences towards others ; and will move us to rejoice in their happiness, and wish that their blessings may be sanctified to them. A man full of love will watch over himself when he hears of the sins of others, particularly if they are his enemies, lest his Heart may carry him into a secret satisfaction at it. He will be deeply concern'd, that God should be dishonour'd by them. It is true, if he has reason to conclude that they are hypocrites, he may be pleased to have that shew itself, that others may not be deceived with false appearances : But the judging of men to be hypocrites, a charitable man will watch over himself, that he may not be carried too easily by interest or partiality to such hard thoughts of other persons : Remembring that our Saviour saw into men's hearts, and so could not be mistaken. In a word, a charitable man will think the best, that in reason he can of all other persons ; he will not believe rashly, nor aggravate things severely, but will make reasonable allowances. and admit of just excuses. In this extent of our kindness, some have a right to larger measures of it, but none ought to be entirely excluded from it. Wedlock makes of two one, so in that state there ought to be the tenderest union : Children are as a part of their parents : Kindred, and friends, are in the closer ties of neighbourhood, and because we are not capable of an universal stretch of love to all, we owe a larger share of affection to some, yet we ought

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ought to diffuse our love in as comprehensive a manner as we can : and if we cannot shew mercy to all, yet we ought to love mercy on all occasions, and to all persons.

A SECOND instance of love, which is also secret, and known only to God and our own consciences, is our praying for others, for friends, and likewise for enemies : We ought to be common intercessors for one another, particularly for those who desire our prayers, or have done us good. What the efficacy of our prayers for others may be towards them, is hid from us : But since God has made it a main act of christian charity, we are sure it will have a very good effect, if not on others, yet at least on our selves. We ought in particular to examine our charity, watching over our tempers when we pray for our enemies ; whether these are only forced acts, or if we are sincere and earnest in them : We are not bound to think well of those who we plainly see are very bad ; nor can we be bound to believe they are not our enemies, when it appears evidently that they are such ; nor are we bound to wish them such successes or blessings as may be a means to harden them, or make others stumble ; yet we ought still to carry in us a temper dispos'd to forgive, and to be reconcil'd to them, and to wish them such a measure of good things, as may be really blessings to them ; we ought ever to pray for a good mind to them, and for every thing that may bring them

them to it, that so we may be thereby encourag'd to live on other terms with them.

PRAYER, as it is the easiest act of charity, it being only the hearty wish of a good mind directed towards God, so it is the perfectest and most valuable act, and therefore by our temper in prayer, as by feeling the pulse, we will be able to judge how true and how fervent our love to the brethren is.

THE third sort of acts by which we express our charity, is our doing all good offices, chiefly in the best things to all such persons as by the order of providence are brought within our reach; we ought to apply this chiefly to the better part of man, his soul, as we are more concern'd in the life and health of our friends, than in some outward inconsiderable circumstances relating to them: so if we value men's souls above all other things, we will apply our charity mainly to these, towards the making them the better and wiser by our means. A man that governs himself by true rules, directs all the good he does to others, in their lower concerns chiefly to this end, that thereby he himself, or some other person, may have such an interest in the man who is so helped, that an advantage may be thereby got, and an interest thereby gained in him, for the doing him good in greater instances.

WE should be ready on all occasions to do what good we can with zeal and industry cheerfully and affectionately; the modest and humble,

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ble, the condescending and tender way of shewing favour, does much add to the value of it : We should not stay till a publick cry awakens us, but be seeking out all the occasions we can find for doing good ; and instead of thinking how little this way will serve our turn, we will be casting about to see how much we can or ought to do.

WE ought in our private conversation, to try how we may work on those who are any way related to us, in our families, and towards our children most particularly, as well as towards servants. We ought to lay out for proper opportunities, and think of the best methods of making the good we set about the most effectual, as well as the most universal : An air of love and kindness will so season all we do, as to give it the best grace and relish.

A FOURTH rule, is to be most particularly careful in our behaviour towards those, who give us reason to believe they are our enemies ; we cannot help thinking of them as they appear to us to be ; yet even in this, we ought to be slow both in believing and judging ill of them ; but the worse that we may be forced to think of them, we ought to pity them the more, and pray the more earnestly for them ; carrying a disposition in our mind, to forgive and to be reconcil'd to them, as soon as we see there is just cause for it, either in the change of their mind, or in such circumstances as may sometimes make it fit for us, tho' justly provoked, to make the first
steps

steps towards a reconciliation : Tho' commonly speaking, we may stay till those who do us wrong, turn again, and repent.

THUS God forgives us, tho' he sometimes prevents us ; yet if we are obliged to demand either reparation or punishment in a legal way, we are not bound to let that go upon a submission ; sometimes we owe the contrary to nature, and to law, as in a pursuit for blood-shed ; yet even then we may shew that we act only by a spirit of justice and duty, and not of revenge. The pursuit in that case will be fair and calm ; Things will not be strain'd nor aggravated, and even when we may be obliged to prosecute a man for his life, we may shew charity and forgiveness in doing what we can towards the saving his soul.

THERE may be instances in which we may be obliged to let suits fall, and even to suffer wrong, in all which we ought chiefly to consider what may tend most to the honour of religion, and to the gaining another's soul, and to be determin'd by that ; being ever ready to entertain all propositions for reconciliation, chiefly when the injury relates to ourselves, and the matter is wholly in our own power.

THE last sort of acts of charity, are the relieving, assisting, and supporting the poor and the afflicted, doing all we can to make the miseries of others easier to them, visiting and comforting them in their afflictions, expressing such a just care of them, and concern in them, as may
be

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be a real relief to them, protecting and assisting them as there may be occasion given.

THE poor are to be consider'd as the chief object of this branch of our charity whom God takes immediately under his own protection, and charges them upon his bounty to us, as on a rent reserved for their relief. This is a debt we pay to God, as well as a charity due to them. In this, God considers chiefly our hearts, and accepts of the *will for the deed*; when the will is real and sincere, and the deed is not in our power: No general rule can be given of the proportion that our charities ought to bear to our income, because of the variety of men's necessities and circumstances. In ordinary cases, it is sufficient to give out *of the abundance*, that is the overplus which can well be spared: But in extraordinary cases, such as persecution, famine, or any other general calamity, we ought to give even out of our *penury or necessity*, straitning our selves that we may the more liberally supply others.

THIS we ought to give freely and chearfully, not despising or reproaching those to whom we give. But the admonishing them of their faults, more particularly of such faults as may have reduced them to a low condition, if done with a good spirit, is a charity to their souls, as well as what we give, is a relief to their bodies. There are charities that even the poor can give;

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such

Luke 21. 4.

such as the visiting, serving, or watching about the sick, and the making their necessities known to such as will or may relieve them. In a word, what good soever we can do to another, is a part of the debt of love that we still owe to all men; and every man who examines his own capacities, as well as the necessities of others, and puts himself forth to the uttermost, will soon find out both what he can do, and to whom the providence of God determines him to do it.

HAVING thus gone over the offices and acts of this love that we owe our neighbours, it is fit in the last place, to recommend this temper of mind both to our selves, and others, by considering the happiness of those who are influenced and possessed by it. They feel they are made like God, inwardly inflamed with a tender and diffusive love, and letting this out as often as happy opportunities present themselves. Of all the attributes of God, his love and goodness is that of which we form the clearest apprehensions. What Joy then must it be to a good man, when he perceives this fairest character of the image of God upon his mind? He knows he is beloved of God, because *he is all love*, and in that resembles the author of his being; it is in this that he perceives he grows *perfect*, as his heavenly Father is perfect; and this gives him confidence in God.

THIS opens his nature, and makes him a fountain of many blessings to others; his sphere
may

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may be narrow, and his hands and compass short, but he feels a sort of infiniteness in his heart and affections, and there would be somewhat like it in his actions, if his fortunes were equal to his mind. He is assured that he does not deceive himself, when he thinks he loves God, because he feels *he loves the brethren*; he is sure religion has a root within him, when it shoots so copiously to the relief of others.

NEXT to this, what a blessing is this temper to mankind, and what honour does it bring to religion? All the world feels the happy influence of it, both in that sweet temper with which it seasons all friendship, and indeed all conversation, and in those large distributions which men of plentiful fortunes are able to make.

THE roughness of passion, the swellings of pride and vanity, and the base narrowness of interest, go all off where this takes place. A soft deportment, an air of humility, with a generous freedom of heart accompany it; and the effects of it are as many and as various as there are occasions given for them; such men are both the *salt of the earth*, and *the light of the world*, and in them men feel somewhat so real and so noble, that they are forced to acknowledge, that all the flights of wit in setting off an exaltation in friendship, or a sublimity of generosity, are but vain airy dreams of an imaginary perfection, that have not such a bottom as this conformity to the divine nature, has in the mind of a good man,

where the motives are as strong, as the effects are real. Instead of the very few, tho' much celebrated, instances of men who have died for their friends, or for their countrey, how many heroical instances has this spirit of love produced, of men who have suffered more intolerable miseries, than one could think the human nature could well bear, for the sake and good of others. Such a spirit again revived, would very much raise the honour and influence of this holy religion, which is all love towards the brethren, as well as towards God.

ANOTHER consideration that recommends this temper, is the happy effect it has on them who are possessed by it. They have a blessed calm within, not disturbed with passion, or jealousy, envy or ill-nature; they look abroad and rejoice in the happiness of all others; they are glad as they see others ease about them; and feel a share in their joy, without the frettings of envy, or any sower complaints, if they themselves have not so large a share of those good things. It is true, this has a reverse, for the same temper makes them enter so far into the consideration of the misfortunes of others, that they bear a proportioned share of these; and persons of this temper, are like to hear of many such objects of compassion, whom they cannot help. This will give them much concern, and that often to little purpose, unless it be to create to them many uneasy minutes: But there is a real pleasure

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pleasure even in this compassion, when it melts us down into the greatest tenderness; for by it we feel we have bowels, both as men, and as christians; and the more effectually these do move us, we have the more certain evidence of our being in a good state.

THIS still heightens the inward peace that a good man feels in the overflowings of his love; he is sure God loves him, because he loves the brethren; his soul dwells at ease, or lodges in his goodness. There is a sweetness in all his thoughts, and wishes; this makes him clear in his views of things; no vapours nor clouds darken him, there is an inward serenity in his mind, and a liveliness in his thoughts, which spreads a cheerfulness into his looks, and cast a soft air all round about him; so that a man has not a more sensible perception of the comfort and joy of health, than a good man has of the happiness of this certain mark of the health of his soul; because he loves all mankind, he is inclined to think that all mankind love him, he is forced some times to change his mind, when he meets with falsehood and malice; but even that does not corrupt his nature; he wonders at it, because he looked not for it, and knows he did not deserve it; but he does not carry his resentments so far, as to grow jealous of many, for the faults of a few, and even his just jealousies do only move him to act with greater reserves, and more caution, but not with less charity.

IN the last place, this charitable temper maintains in him a constant disposition for prayer, a calm mind is easily recollected, nothing dissipates the thoughts, making it less attentive, and less fixed than passion; the prayers of such men are hindered by them, both they are hindered from offering them up as they ought to do; and this ill-temper makes that their prayers cannot be accepted. A charitable man that has had much occasion given him to forbear and forgive others, and to do good for evil, dares lay claim to mercy and pardon, with much humble assurance; for tho' he is very ready to call the debts of others to him, as the owing a few pence, while he acknowledges he owes many talents to God; yet from a forgiving temper in himself, he gathers both an argument to plead for forgiveness, and a character that makes him conclude that *much is forgiven him, because he feels he loves much.* He has a brightness in his mind while he looks up to God, and he is sure that such prayers, joyned with pure and tender affections to all about him, are as a sweet-smelling savour before God.

THERE is such a likeness or sympathy between the spirit of love, and the spirit of true devotion, that they have a sensible influence one upon another, to quicken or to flatten each the other; as the one rises, or abates, the other will also rise and fall. Thus it appears how happy this temper is that makes us so like God, and

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and become such blessings to one another. That puts our minds into such a right situation and keeps us in a continual disposition of offering up prayers to him, which are ever heard, when they are brought out from hearts inflamed with love, and melting in true unsophisticated devotion. To the God of love, be all honour and glory, for ever, and ever,
Amen.

S E R.

S E R M O N III.

Of false Swearing.

LEVITICUS XIX. 12.

*Ye shall not swear by my name falsely,
neither shalt thou profane the name
of thy God. I am the Lord.*

IT is in sins, as it is in all the transgressions of the laws of the land; that tho' every breach of law is a contempt of the authority of those that enacted it; yet some are more immediate assaults made on their persons, or on their rights, which are called *high treason*, and are punished with a more distinguished severity, proportioned to the nature of the offence. In like manner, every sin is a violation of the laws of God; so that whosoever breaketh any one of them, is in some respect *guilty of all*, according to St. *James*; yet there are some sins that do more directly strike at the honour of God,
and

ch. 2. ver. 10, 11.

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and that do *import* either the denying or the defying some of his attributes.

He that swears *falsly*, to instance it in the particular mentioned in my text, does either say in his heart *that there is no God*, or that he does not hear and see, or at least that he will not arise to judge those who do thus appeal *falsly* to him ; and therefore it is, that so severe a threatening is denounced in the 3d commandment, *that God will not hold them guiltless that take his name in vain.*

HERE there are two phrases of speech, that import much more than will perhaps appear at the first hearing of them ; the *not holding them guiltless*, does imply a great severity of punishment ; and that tho' men may be so regardless of their oaths, as to think they are but words and wind, and so they may throw them out without any regard either to the things themselves, concerning which they swear, or to the majesty of that God by whom they swear ; yet all these their oaths are marked before God, who will call them to a severe account for them. The other expression in that commandment is, *the taking the name of God in vain.* If we understand these words according to the meaning of *vain*, in our language, then it will follow, that if rash, inconsiderate and needless oaths will be punished by God, much more will false ones, which are of much higher degree of wickedness. But by *vain*, in the hebrew phrase is to be understood often *false*, and so it is in *Psal.* 24. 3.
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Of false Swearing.

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He that hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully; where there are two expressions that import the same thing. So *Psal.* 139, 20, *For thine enemies speak against thee wickedly, and they take thy name in vain.* So also *Isa.* 45, 19. *Vain* is set in opposition to *righteousness*. *I said not seek ye me in vain, I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare the things that are right.* So *St. Paul* says, *that if Christ is not risen, our preaching is vain, and your faith also is vain,* *1 Cor.* 15. 14. and in a great many other places, it is plain that *vainety* stands for *Falshood*. And since we see that in all the other commandments, the chief sin of a sort, or the chief duty in any kind, is that which is named, as that to which the other sins or duties of that kind are to be reduced, we have reason to believe that the same order is also observed here.

THE chief acts of idolatry, are either the worshipping false Gods, or worshipping the true God in an image. The chief rule of the time of worship, is the observing the 7th day, and the keeping it holy; the chief duty in the order of the world, is the honour that children owe their parents, and the most heinous offence we can commit against our neighbour, if it be with relation to his person, is to kill him; if it be with relation to his family, is to defile his bed, if it be with relation to his estate, is to steal, or if it be with relation to his reputation, is to appear as a false witness against him. These are the particulars

particulars mentioned in the law, to which all other things of that kind, tho' of a lower degree of guilt, are to be reduced, therefore it agrees with this, that the sin mentioned in the 3d commandment, should be the most heinous sin in that order of things; and by consequence, that the *taking*, or as the phrase in the hebrew is, *the lifting up of the name of the Lord in vain*, is the swearing *falsly* in those appeals that are made to God, which are sometimes accompanied with the lifting up the eyes or hands unto heaven.

THE oaths that we take, are of several sorts. first, assertory ones in order to our affirming the truth of somewhat; and such is the evidence that men give in trials, or the affidavits that they make in order to the preserving the memory of some truth, that consists in their knowledge. And this is done with the religion of an oath, that so the persons thus deposing, may be restrain'd by that sacred tie, to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth. The whole order of the world turns upon this, that, as two witnesses are more than one, so two witnesses ought to be believ'd rather than any one, who is a party; it is therefore very necessary, that the consciences of those who are called to witness any truth, should be so deeply and solemnly charged by the nature and attributes of God, and in particular by his all-searching eye that discovers all secrets, and that will bring them to light, and to judgement at the

the last day ; that from thence they may be engaged neither to add to the truth, nor to suppress any part of it. And therefore those who are called on thus to swear concerning any matter of fact, ought to examine their memories well and distinctly, and to affirm nothing but as it consists in their memory ; speaking doubtfully where they are doubtful, and positively only where they are positive. In order to the doing this aright, they ought to recollect their thoughts carefully, to observe their words well, and to lay aside all affections to every thing but the truth.

AN other sort of oaths, is in order to the confirming of any promises, and covenants to which parties bind themselves : Such are the oaths of princes or states, to observe their leagues and treaties : The oaths of those who marry, and of all magistrates or members of any body who take oaths to observe such rules and orders as are set them. And in a word, such are all the oaths by which any persons bind themselves to perform any conditions which they have agreed on with others. Now it is necessary in order to the quiet and safety of the world, that all persons who do thus covenant with one another, be secure in their hopes of the performance of such as may deal with them ; for, if it were not for this, there would be a perpetual distrust in the world, wars or quarrels could never be made up, and all parties would be very remiss in

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performing their parts in mutual agreements, if they did not expect returns of the like fidelity from others ; and therefore it is that men's consciences are upon these occasions so solemnly charged by an oath, which is an appeal to God, by which he is called on to be the avenger of the injured party, and the executor of Justice upon those who perform not their parts.

Now when men do covenant and swear to perform that which is not in their power to do, as for instance, to pay Sums of money that are beyond their stock or credit, or when they do not intend to execute religiously that which they promise so sacredly ; or when they swear falsely concerning any matter in which they are brought to give evidence, they become guilty of one of the most crying of all sins. In the first place, they provoke God's wrath in the highest degree, who has declared that he will be *a swift witness against the false swearers*. And to make this the more sensible, the judgments of God against such are set forth by the prophet *Zachariah*, under the figure of a *flying roll on which curse is writ* ; and to make us apprehend the variety of the curses, it *was writ on the one side against every one that stealeth, and on the other side against every one that sweareth* ; and they were to be cut off according to it : And, it is added, *I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely*

Malachi, 3. 5. Zach. 5. 3.

falsely by my name, and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof. Words that import both the severity of the judgments of God against such offenders, and their pursuing them close to their privatest retreats, and finding them out there.

NOR indeed can we well apprehend, that it can be otherwise: For if in matters of truth any thing is referred to the decision of an honest man, and if he is boldly challeng'd by a liar to vouch for his falsehood, he will certainly interpose with a just indignation against such a boldness of lying, and declare the truth; much more will the true and righteous God arise, and appear in behalf of that, which is so suitable to his own nature: For he is *a God that loves truth in the inward parts.* Even the inclinations to falsehood are odious to him, since *justice and truth are the establishment of his throne*; and every piece of falsehood is a falling from the likeness of the divine nature, and a conformity to the nature of the Devil, who was, as our Saviour described him, *a liar and a murderer from the beginning*; so that *liars become the children of the Devil*, and every lie they make is *the doing the works of their father the Devil.* If then every lie is so heinous a sin, that *all liars who love lies and make them*, are shut out of the kingdom of heaven, and *cast into the lake that*

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burneth

Psalms 51. 6. Psalm 89. 14. John 8. 44.
Rev. 21. 8. 22. 15.

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burneth with fire and brimstone ; how great must the punishment of those be who add to their lies, the highest contempt of God that is possible, when they attest him as the witness and voucher of their lies? This is such an offence, that if there were not another world, in which vengeance is to be executed against them, we must expect thunders or earthquakes, diseases, or other judgments should break out presently upon such offenders. But because there is *a day coming in which God will judge the world in righteousness*, therefore judgments are not always speedily poured out upon them, yet, that the world may not go on in a contempt of the truth and justice of God, he does upon some signal occasions set such marks upon false swearing, that those who observe them, are forced to say, *Verily he is a God that judges in the earth*. Their estates do sometimes melt away ; their persons are sometimes struck with extraordinary diseases, and the entail of this curse does often descend to the children, who inherit the misery and shame of their perjured parents.

In those oaths that are promissory, that is to say, in covenants and promises, made sure by an oath, God is appealed to by both sides, as the judge against him that breaks : Now, if among men, this is a standing rule that any mediator or umpire to whom the parties refer themselves, is bound in case the agreement is afterwards broken by either of them, to join with him that is wrong-
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Acts 17. 31. Psalm 58. 11.

ed, against him that does the wrong; what thoughts can we have of God, if we do not believe that he will arise and plead the cause of those who have ended their differences by a covenant, which being confirmed by an oath, is, if we may so speak, deposited in his hands? And there have also appeared in all the ages of the world, several characters of the judgments of God on those who have broken the faith of treaties and covenants. *Shall he break the oath of God and prosper?* said God by the prophet, concerning king *Zedekiah*; and, tho' such oaths may sometimes become hurtful to those that swear them, yet this is reckoned one of the characters of the man that *shall dwell on God's holy hill; he that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.* When *Joshua* and the people of *Israel* were deceived by the *Gibeonites*; and, upon that, sware a covenant to them, tho' it was both hurtful to them, and contrary to a positive precept given to them by *Moses*; yet God in that case dispensed with his own precept, rather than they should upon that pretence do a thing that was so contrary to the faith and safety of mankind.

BUT, this is not to be carried on so far as that, if we have bound ourselves by an oath to commit a sin, we ought, for our oath's sake to do it, which was *Herod's* pretence for cutting off the head of *St. John* the baptist: For, we can never,

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Ezec. 17. 15, 16. Psal. 15. 4. Josh. 9. 18, 19. Matt. 14. 9.

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ver, by any Act of our own, be bound to break the laws of God, therefore, if we swear that we will do that which we know to be a sin, at the time when we take the oath, we commit a most heinous sin; for we protest to God that we will break his law; and, in this case, we are bound still by the law of God, not to keep our oath, but we ought to repent very seriously of that great wickedness, of *swearing falsely in making a covenant*. And, if we swear an oath, in general terms, like that of *Herod*, who swore that he would give to *Herodias's* daughter whatsoever she should ask of him, even to the half of his kingdom; if that general oath, when brought to a specialty, has sinful matter in it, such as was the cutting off the head of an innocent and holy man, which that young woman asked of *Herod*; in that case, one is not bound to keep his oath, but is obliged to repent for his having sworn in so rash a manner.

Thus you see the obligation of keeping your oaths, with relation to God, whose holy name is called upon, and whose attributes are appealed to in them. In the next place, consider the obligation of swearing true, with relation to the order and government of the world. An oath is the most sacred tie among men, and if the regard due to it is once lost, there is nothing left by which mankind can be kept in order. All justice turns upon this, all treaties are sealed by this, and all the injustice that is done
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among men, upon the oaths of false witnesses, lies wholly at their door; for judges and juries are bound to govern themselves by the evidence that lies before them. Therefore as this sin is heinous in it self, so it receives a terrible aggravation from the effects that do often follow upon it. Some innocent persons lose their lives, others are unjustly dispossessed of their estates, in whole or in part, by false swearers; and all the guilt of such unjust judgments, lies upon the perjured witnesses. Nor is there any sin of which it is harder truly to repent, than of false swearing; for as in all acts of injustice there can be no repentance, without restitution; so when any person has taken away another man's estate, or good name by a false oath, he must restore or make up that damage, by confessing that he swore false, so destroying the credit of his oath. Now this cannot be done, without bringing a man under the most publick and blackest infamy that is possible; and this will be very hard for any man to do; therefore the repenting of this sin is very uneasy, since few men can be wrought upon so far, as thus to sacrifice their reputation to the quiet of their conscience; so that such as once sin this way, must resolve either to fear their consciences, and to perish in their sins, or to do one of the hardest things that human nature can resolve on, which is to take the shame of perjury on themselves. Yet this after all may be done in cases that relate to men's estates or reputations; but such as have sworn falsely in criminal

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criminal matters, upon whose evidence innocent persons have been condemned, and executed, are yet in a more miserable condition ; their repentance, and even their public avowing their infamy, cannot restore their precious life, which their false oath took away : So that they have a vast load of horror on them, and can never repair the mischief they have done. They are indeed bound to do all that in them lies, and to own their falshood, which is some reparation to a man's family, and is ever an indispensable piece of their repentance, as being all the restitution that they can possibly make ; but this is a comfortless repentance, when the person whom their evidence murdered, cannot be by all that they can do or say, brought to life again.

FROM all these considerations you may gather the heinousness of this sin, both in itself, as it is a high contempt of God, and in its consequences, as it ruins all the order and justice among men, and as it gives the conscience the deepest and the most incurable wounds ; which cannot be healed but by a repentance, that requires a higher measure of grace, than we have reason to think is given to such extraordinary offenders. But if this sin is so heinous, what can we say of the great numbers of witnesses that appear often with contrary evidence, one to another, where it is certain that the one side must be false ? What shall we say of the easiness that is observed in many, to favour the concerns of
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their friends in their evidence ; and of the broad characters of falshood that appear every day in trials ; but that *God must have a controversy with the land, for the lying and swearing* that is in it, as the prophet *Hosea* said of old ? What shall be said of those, who for saving a little in taxes, which is a sin without this aggravation, it being a cheating the government of what belongs to it, do swear the value of their estate far below the truth of it ? This is like the sin of *Esau*, who sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage ; such persons sell themselves cheap, and for saving a very little money, destroy their souls for ever. People are so accustomed to swear in common discourse, that they have lost the fear of an oath ; and in judgment they take their oaths in so slight a manner, as if it were only the hearing a man read a few words to them, and the kissing of a book ; that they do not enough consider, that they are in the presence of God, who knows the truth or falshood of all they say ; and who will at the last and great day, bring them to judgment for it : And that their kissing the book is an appeal to God, to send all the judgments written in that book upon them, in case they swear falsely.

THUS it is that the land is over-run with perjury ; for even an oath that carries the truth too far, by adding circumstances to it, deserves no milder name. And of what use is our religion to us, if it does not restrain us from such a fearful

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ful and crying sin, whose guilt is such, that it needs no words to aggravate it ; and where the crime is so plain, that no man can pretend to excuse it by his ignorance ? The lowest degree of knowledge must inform all persons of its heinousness, and every man knows that he is doing it, when he commits it ; so that inadvertence does never excuse this sin. O consider then who he is, whom you *provoke unto jealousy, are ye stronger than he ?* Are ye able to withstand his power, or to resist his thunders ? Or are ye able so much as to cover yourselves from the horrors which your own awakened consciences will raise within you ? But tho' you may make flight of a court of justice, in which you are called on to take an oath, yet remember there is a day coming, in which you must stand at a great and dreadful judgment seat, where that God, with whose name you do now make so bold, will call you to a terrible account, for all those profanations of his holy name.

AND as for such as take promissory oaths, particularly those who enter into any office, and swear to do the duties belonging to it faithfully ; they ought to carry the remembrance of their oath along with them, in every thing they do ; and to examine themselves often, whether they act according to it, or not. It is a fearful thing to consider, that in this nation, there is scarce any thing more common, than the engaging people by oaths in every station in which they are put ; and one should hope that some effects of this

this should appear in the conduct of the men that are so tied. But, alas ! this has no other effect, but to shew us how little the sense of religion, or the sacredness of an oath, work upon us. Oaths are no sooner taken than they are both forgotten and broken. By this means, the name of God, and the profession of the true religion among us, is blasphemed by our enemies ; with whom it passes for a proverb, that *England is the land of oaths*, where they are so often requir'd, that they are never observ'd. But shall not *God visit for these things, and shall not his soul be avenged on such a people as this is?*

WHAT shall be said of the breach of that sacred vow of marriage, which, being made with the solemnities of religion, is of the nature of an oath ; and yet how avowedly and impudently it is almost every where broken ? But of all the oaths that are daily taken, there are none that lay a greater obligation on the party who takes them, than those of jurours, of both sorts, who are bound to make presentments, or to return verdicts according to the truth that appears to them. Jurours are the judges in those particulars that they are charged with ; so that they put on the person of God, in some respect, and represent him. How crying a sin is it then in them, to make any other presentment, or give any other verdict, than according to the conviction of their conscience, especially in matters of life and death ? Among all the degrees

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grees of wilful murder, there is not any one that carries such a crying guilt with it, as that of a jurour's finding a man guilty, when he is convinc'd of his innocence; or the contrary, of acquitting those whom he believes guilty. Here are all the characters of the devil appearing in one single action, *lying and perjury, injustice and murder*, do all meet together in it. Oh! dare we be so uncharitable as to believe, that any can be guilty of so much wickedness at once? And yet, alas, it is but too visible, that in all trials, and that even in matters of blood, friendship and favour, or other partial regards, work too oft on many jurours, as much if not more than truth or evidence. These are crying evils, by which the name of our God is profaned. Oh! that in order to the preventing and reforming them, we did more seriously consider that *he is the Lord*, the Lord of heaven and earth, and a pure and holy God, who will be *glorified in all that draw near to him, and that call upon his great and dreadful name, who will appear in flaming fire, to take vengeance on all that profane it: Who can abide the day of his anger, or dwell with everlasting burnings?* Therefore I do now warn you to fly from the wrath that is to come; and to sanctify his name, for it is holy. *To him be all glory. Amen.*

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S E R M O N IV.

Of Swearing.

St. JAMES V. 12.

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, neither by any other oath ; but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay ; least ye fall into condemnation.

TH E R E are few things in the whole book of God more expressly forbidden, than swearing in common discourse ; as appears both from the words now read to you, and from those words of our Saviour, in his sermon on the mount. The chief design of which, is to tie his followers to a more exact morality than that, to which the Jews believed themselves obliged by the law of *Moses* ; and therefore

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with relation to swearing, he said, *ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thy self, but shalt perform to the Lord thy oaths.* So that it seems the Jews thought themselves only bound to swear true, or to fulfil any covenants that they had confirmed by an oath. But our Saviour carries the matter much further in these Words, *I say unto you swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black; but let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil.* It seems these were the common oaths among the Jews at that time; the word rendred *earth*, ought to be rendred *land*, for the Jews thought there was such a peculiar holiness in their whole country, but more particularly in *Jerusalem*, because of the temple that was in it; that from the relation which their *land* and *chief city* had to God, they thought these might be sworn by; and it was a common custom among the heathens, to lay curses and imprecations on a man's head; taken perhaps from the manner of offering Sacrifices, by laying the hand upon the head of the sacrifice; by which it became devoted to God. Therefore as our Saviour shewed the folly of swearing by the heaven, by their land, or by *Jerusalem*, from
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this, that these were only related to God, whereas we ought only to swear by God himself. So the folly of putting ones head under a curse, appear'd in this, that no man had power over his head, not so much as over the hair of his head, or over the colour of it.

IN conclusion, our Saviour does so plainly forbid all swearing in our communication, that tho' it is no wonder if some have understood these words in so strict a sense, that all sort of swearing at all times were forbidden by them; yet it is indeed a very unconceiveable thing to imagine how such multitudes who submit to the authority of the gospel, should yet so avowedly go on in a practise directly contrary to it, and that among the members of those that name the name of Christ, that is, who call themselves Christians, from his name, there are so few who regard or fear an oath; so that the communication of the greater part of the world should be made up of oaths, and sometimes of the most studied and execrable oaths imaginable.

ST. *James* in the words now read, prefixeth to them a very important introduction; *above all things swear not*; which expressees in a most particular manner the heinousness of the sin; and he concludes them with a most terrible threatening, *lest you fall into condemnation*. Since he that swears, especially when that wicked custom grows up in him to curses and imprecations, draws a deep train of guilt upon himself: For if any one of those execrations that he lays on him-

self, and of those damnations that he wishes to himself, should fall on him, he has no pretence of complaint, God having dealt with him only according to his own wishes. But before I lay out the sin of common swearing, which as you have heard, is so expressly forbidden, both by our Saviour himself, and in the words of my text; I will first shew you the lawfulness of swearing in judgment, or upon great and solemn occasions.

You are then to consider, that an oath is an appeal to God, as the witness of the truth of all that we say; so that it implies an acknowledgment of his allseeing eye, of his justice, and truth, of his governing the world, and of the judgment to come. Therefore an oath is in it self an act of divine worship, by which we acknowledge many of God's attributes, and submit our selves to them; so that *thou shalt swear the Lord liveth*, which is frequently mentioned by the Prophets; imports, that the people of *Israel* should abandon all idolatry, and swear no more, neither by *Baal*, nor *Malcham*, or any other false God, and only worship the true and the living God. It is then very plain, that all the evil that can be in an oath, must consist in the abuse of it; even in this, that it is either false in it self, or that it is rashly or unduly taken.

If we consider farther, that God is proposed as the original of all perfection, to which we ought to conform our selves in all matters, we will

Isa. 65. 16. Jeremy 12. 16. Zeph. 1. 5.

will find him represented to us in the scripture, as confirming both his promises, and his threatenings by oaths, according to that acknowledged principle laid down by St. Paul, *that an oath for confirmation was the end of all strife*: And thus he *having no greater to swear by, swore by himself to Abraham, that in blessing he would bless him*. He also swore by *his holiness unto David, that his seed after him should sit upon the throne*. He also swears that *the Messiah should be a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck*. He also swears by himself, *that he does not desire the death of a sinner*: And to add the more terror to his threatenings, he swears to his people in his wrath, *that they should not enter into his rest*. Now we are sure that nothing that is so often proposed to us, as an act of that eternal mind which is infinitely and perfectly holy, can be evil in it self. We do also find the angels of God represented in Daniel, and in the Revelations, as *lifting up their hand, and swearing by him that liveth for ever and ever*. St. Paul in his Epistles, does frequently say, *God is witness*, or, *as God is witness*; in which appeal consists the essence of an oath. Once he carries it farther, and calls *God for a record upon his soul*, which is an im-

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Heb. 6. 16. Heb. 6. 13. 22 Gen. 16,
 17. Psal. 89. 35. Psal. 110. 4. Ezek. 33.
 2. Psal. 95. 2. Dan. 12. 7. Rev. 10. 6.
 Rom. 1. 9. Rom. 9. 1. 2 Cor. 1. 18. Phil.
 1. 8. 1 Thes. 20. 5. 2 Cor. 1. 23.

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precatory oath. And thus we have the authority and practice of an inspired writer, justifying the lawfulness of an oath.

BUT the greatest of all warrants for this, we find in the person of our Saviour, *who fulfilled all righteousness*, and observed most exactly all the laws which he himself set us; and therefore we are sure that his precepts must be understood in such a sense as does not reproach his own practice. Now in order to the understanding this aright, and indeed for the clearing the whole matter, it is to be observed, that among the Jews, the form of swearing in judgment, was not as it is now among us, that the witness or party was obliged to swear; but the judge did bind them with an *oath of cursing*, or adjuration, and charged them *by the living God to declare the truth*; and then the person that heard this curse, was bound *to utter the matter*, and to declare the truth, otherwise he became guilty; which is expressed by the Phrase of *bearing his iniquity*, according to the law of *Moses*, in these words, *and if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing* (or adjuration) *and is a witness whether he have seen or known it, if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity*. According to this it was that when our Saviour was brought before the sanhedrim of the Jews, and that many things were objected to him, and many witnesses were brought against him, whose witnessing did not agree; the high-priest did according

Lev. 5. 1.

according to that law, charge him in these words, *I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ the son of God, or not?* now it is said, that 'till then, *Christ held his peace*; for as long as it was free for him to speak, or not, so long he thought fit to shew both his patience and his readiness to lay down his life. Now the case was altered, he was charged with an oath, and so he was indeed upon his oath, and therefore he was bound to speak; so he answered the high-priest, according to the Phrase of that time, *thou hast said it*; which imports, *it is as thou hast said*. Here we have our Saviour's authority for answering upon oath in a court of justice, when we are required to do it.

As for the form of giving an oath, whether the judge shall give it in the way of a charge, as it was among the *Jews*, or require the party to pronounce the words himself, to give the more terror, or to make the impression deeper; this is certainly in the power of any government to fix, as it is most proper to answer the ends of tending an oath, and as they judge may be most suitable to the state of mens minds; since the matter is only a point of form, that is not determined by a positive law.

AMONG the *Jews*, their kings and judges had a power to put the people under a charge and curse, as appears by the story of *Saul* and *Jonathan*. So it was also in the oath that was giv-

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en to purge the woman that was suspected of adultery ; where the priest charged the woman, and a visible curse followed in case she swore false : So it was agreeable to that authority, which was lodged with the princes and priests of that dispensation, that they should charge witnesses with an oath. But when there were no more of those awful characters to be seen in the charges of magistrates, then it was very reasonable to change the form of tendering an oath ; since it is natural for a man to have more regard to words pronounced by himself, than to those that are utter'd by a judge ; and it being necessary for the preservation and safety of human society, that an oath should be tendered in that way that should strike the greatest awe into the mind of him that takes it ; the obliging the person that swears to pronounce the words, did naturally tend to promote this. The ceremony of *lifting up the hand* was also added in place, as expressing the appeal made to God, who dwells in heaven ; and that of kissing the book was added in other places, as among us, to express that one takes his oath, as he expects a share in the contents of that book, and particularly of the curses contained in it, in case he swears falsely.

THESE things being laid all together, you may plainly observe, that the general words in which both our Saviour, and this text, forbids swearing, do only relate to the common use of swearing in ordinary conversation ; nor can our Saviour's words be understood of swearing in judgment,

judgment, since in his time, that was not an oath which the party or witness swore, but his swearing was an act of his obedience to his superior, to which he was bound by the law of *Moses*. So that the generality of the expressions by which swearing is forbid, must be restrain'd to men's communication, according to our Saviour's words.

BUT further, tho' it is seldom lawful to swear, except it be in judgment, yet since we find *St. Paul* appeals in his epistles often to God *as the witness* of the truth of what he writ, it is plain that upon great and important occasions, men even tho' not of judgment may appeal to God. when one man appeals to another, and is willing to stand to what he shall say upon oath, then he refers the matter to his oath, as to the sentence of a judge; so in such cases, when the end of an oath is answer'd, that it is brought for confirmation, to put *an end to strife*, no doubt it may be used; but after all it is liable to so much abuse, that as it ought never to be done but upon some weighty consideration, such as the settling of differences, or the preventing suits of law, so it is to be made use of very seldom.

AND thus far the lawfulness of swearing in judgement has been made out; the other part of the discourse will be much sooner clear'd, which is the unlawfulness of swearing in common conversation. No more needs be said for that, but to repeat our Saviour's words, and this charge given by *St. James*, for if we submit to
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the authority of Jesus Christ or of the pen-men of the scriptures, we need not anxiously dispute concerning any matter further, than to shew that it is plainly and positively determined by them; and so it is become one of the laws of the christian religion. But it is the peculiar glory of this religion, that all its laws are holy, just, and good; and therefore it is fit in the next place to consider, what reasons there may be found for supporting the equity and reasonableness of this law.

IN the first place, the root of all religion and vertue is a due sense of the divine being and perfections, it is the thinking on these often that governs a man's mind, that keeps him under the secret awe of religion, and that guides and directs the course of his whole life; therefore nothing tends more to the giving religion a mighty force, and the making the springs of it within us strong, than the habit of becoming serious and composed, grave and attentive, at every time that we think or speak of God; and a slight or careless way of speaking of him, must lessen the authority and weight of divine impressions. So the habit of swearing brings on one a lightness of mind when the idea's of God are before him; and as whatsoever does insensibly weaken the fibres of the stomach, does also dissolve the whole strength of our being and constitution; so every thing that lessens the majesty of God to us, or our idea's of him, weakens all the powers of religion within us.

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To this must be added the indecency of such a practice with relation to God, who is worshipped by all the hosts of heaven with all possible reverence and humility; and therefore an oath being an act of worship, by which he is acknowledged, this ought not to be done but with all due attention and fear.

In the *third* place it is to be consider'd, that nothing is more necessary to human society, and to the preserving the justice and order of the world, than that the sacred regard of an oath be preserved in its due veneration; it being the solemnest bond that can be found among men, and the powerfullest charm to oblige them to the greatest exactness and strictness of truth; therefore whatsoever makes the obligation of this less sensible, or takes off from the awe of it, must be a great mischief to mankind. Now it is certain, that an oath is so much the less dreadful, as it grows more familiar and habitual to us. He that does not know what it is to swear in his discourse, will by the uncouthness of the thing be much struck, when an oath is tender'd to him; whereas he who lets oaths fly from him upon all occasions feels nothing that is extraordinary upon him, when he swears; so the dread of an oath being so necessary for the just government of the world, every thing must be immoral which slackens that to so high a degree, as common swearing does.

In the last place, no man goes into the habits of swearing, but he often swears falsely; and he
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grows in these, when he finds that he is not believed, to the most dreadful curses and imprecations that he can invent. Now I suppose it is not necessary to use many words for aggravating the sin of false swearing, which is one of the highest affronts that any mortal can offer to the eternal mind, when the God of truth is appealed to, as the witness or voucher of a lye. But since this is opened to you in another sermon more fully; so no more shall be said upon it at present, but that we must admire the long suffering patience of God; who being so often called on by common swearers, to *Judge* them, to *confound* them, and even to *damn* them if they lye, when yet it is but too visible that they swear falsely; yet that he looks on, and hears and sees all this, without letting loose his thunders and judgments upon them. certainly this is not *after the manner of men*, *God's ways are not like our ways*; for if we were appealed to in so impudent a manner as these men do daily to God, we could not bear it, but would put such shameless men out of countenance, and would openly declare the truth, to the confusion of such liars. Now if those who have got into this wicked custom of swearing, will deal honestly with themselves, they will find how much guilt they have brought, and do daily bring upon themselves, by the many false oaths that fly from them, perhaps much oftner than they think on; for where this custom once prevails, the sense of an oath grows often so low, that is usual enough for such men to
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offer as many oaths as they can think on, and many more than a good man can bear, rather than once give their word of honour ; as if the honour of the great and living God, were nothing in comparison of that which is for most part but the vanity of a poor despicable creature.

THUS you see in how many respects the immorality of common swearing is made out ; so that this part of the gospel-law that forbids all swearing in discourse, is founded on the highest and justest reasons that can be imagined.

ONE consideration more belongs to this matter, which tho' it does not shew the immorality of swearing, yet it shews that we have no reason from the frailties of our corrupted natures, to complain of the law ; which is this, that no appetite nor principle in our nature carries us to swearing, so that we cannot pretend that this law is severe, or that it presses hard upon us, by crossing our inclinations ; since nothing but a base compliance with a brutal or impious custom, can lead any man into this vicious habit ; nor does either the consideration of pleasure or advantage engage any to continue in it. It is plainly contrary to our interest, for a looseness in swearing may well lessen, but can never raise any man's credit : So that all that any swearers can plead in their own excuse, is the laziness of not being able to watch over or cross a custom, that they have contracted, and which they cannot break without some

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care and application of mind. But since this is a custom which all men contract of their own accord, without any bias put upon them from their natural inclinations, a habit so grown upon any person, cannot lessen, but does certainly very much aggravate their guilt. Besides any custom that is of this nature, that is to say a meer custom, without pleasure or advantage recommending it, may be soon broken and disused by some attention and care. And it is certain, that we declare, we have very little regard to God, or to his laws, if we will not give our selves the trouble of a little watchfulness and care, in order to the observing our words.

AND thus it appears, that this law of our religion is in it self holy and good; that it is design'd for many good ends, and that we have no just reason to complain of it. But what shall be said, if a law so plainly enacted, and so easy to be observed, is so publickly and so grossly violated, if swearing is become the common dialect, and such a part of our language, that a man cannot learn the one without the other; and that it makes up the greatest part of some men's discourse, so that they can scarce go through the common parts of conversation, without a variety of oaths; and if they become in any thing earnest or warm, then their mouths are so fill'd with oaths, that it gives horror to those, who have any regard to that holy name, which is so grossly prophaned by them?

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SOMETIMES they swear by themselves, by *their souls, their faith, or their conscience*: But these are the more modest sort of swearers, to say upon ones soul, faith, or conscience is no oath, but only an asseveration or protestation, which may be made upon weighty occasions; but they do lose their force, when they return in ones mouth for every trifle. But to say by ones soul, faith and conscience, is to swear, and to appeal to them; and so this is the giving a part of the honour, that is due only to God, to creatures.

ANOTHER sort of swearing, or rather of profane and impious speaking, is when the *Devil* is mentioned upon every occasion; chiefly when one wishes the *Devil* may take or confound either some other person, or one's self. The Devil is the great enemy both of God, and of mankind, a spirit that hates all goodness, and that delights in mischief; but is through the great goodness of God, so effectually chained up, that he can do no more mischief, than as God, for accomplishing the secret ends of his providence, is pleased to suffer. All wishes then that relate to the enlarging his sphere of doing evil to our selves or others, is the wishing our selves or others out of the divine protection, and under the tyranny of those powers of darkness, which is a monstrous piece of impiety.

ANOTHER and the most common sort of swearing, is the making use of the name of God upon every occasion, which is done by many, without any sort of regard, or often without so much

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as matter for an oath. But to such it is become so familiar to dishonour that holy name, that it comes into every part of their discourse, and is interwoven in it all, without either order or design; as if that name to which we ought to bow, and tremble when it is mentioned, were to be profaned more than any other word of our language.

OTHERS think that perhaps this is too bare a way of swearing, and therefore they invent other additions to it, to make it sound bigger. And because God honoured our nature so far, as to assume it, and in it to *live*, to be *wounded*, and to *bleed* in it; therefore instead of blessing God for this his great goodness, and wonderful love, *life, blood, and wounds*, are added to the name of God, to give the oath a bigger sound; so far are such men from rejoicing in that wonderful manifestation of the divine nature, in dwelling bodily in Christ Jesus, that they make this the frequentest subject of their pophinations. Others, to whom these oaths must give a just horror, study to soften the sound of them a little, that so they may swear a little more decently, which shews how well they love it, when they take pains to reconcile it to the antipathy that their natures may bear to it, in its rudest sound and shape.

THE highest degree of swearing is, when men burst forth into curses and imprecations, wishing the judgments and curse of God to fall upon themselves, or others; and not only that
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he may *confound* them, but as if they would defy him to do his worst, wishing that he may *damn* themselves, or others. How justly may those who have accustomed themselves to utter such dreadful wishes, fear that God may take them at their word, and make them feel for ever, that which they have so often wished might befall them? For tho' God is long-suffering, and slow to anger, yet when he is provoked every day, by those who make a mock at sin, and that strengthen themselves in their wickedness; he will at last arise, and reckon with those profane and Godless men, for all their impious and ungodly speeches. And, if we must give an account to God in the great day, *for every idle word*, how terrible must their account be, whose mouths, that are made to glorifie God, are so constantly employed in dishonouring him! As they have loved cursing, so it shall cleave to them; for they shall be cast into a state, in which, if they are not restrained, they will be for ever cursing God, and all good beings; and where most probably, they will be for ever cursing themselves, and all that are about them. From which, God of his infinite mercy preserve us, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord, *Amen.*

S E R M O N V.

Of observing the Sabbath.

EXODUS XX. 8, 9, 10, 11.

Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy.

Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work.

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD, &c.

THIS is one of the ten commandments which God delivered from mount *Sinai*, by the hand of *Moses* to the people of *Israel*; and you pray frequently that God would have mercy on you for the sins you commit, with relation to it; and that he would incline your hearts to keep this law. It is therefore very necessary for you to study to understand the true meaning of it; that so you may be rightly directed in your practice: And that

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that you may avoid both extreams, as well that of a judaising scrupulosity, as that of a loose profanation of it.

IT is the last commandment of the 1st table, and is a fence to the observance of the three former, as the last in the 2d table, *Thou shalt not covet*, is a fence to all that precede it. For if the heart is restrained from inordinate desires and passions, it will be easy to abstain from the sins forbidden in the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th, commandments. So if we *sanctifie the Lord's-day*, by reflecting seriously on the majesty and attributes of that great God that *made the heavens and the earth*; this will give us such impressions of him, as will preserve us from worshipping any other God, or from worshipping the true God in an image. *To whom can we liken him*, that made all things of nothing? This will also preserve in us such an awe of him, that we will both think and speak of him *with reverence, and Godly fear*; and so it will effectually restrain us from all vain oaths, but most of all from swearing falsely, which is one of the highest indignities that can be done to his holy and great name.

It is true, that religion ought to be the great and constant business of our whole lives; but our bodies need and require so many things of us, that as they must have a large share of time and thought; so they would soon engross all, and the sense of religion would be quite lost in the world, if there were not some set times appropriated

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priated for the remembrance of it, and for the solemn worship of God. Publick worship is necessary for preserving mankind from falling into atheism on the one hand, and into idolatry on the other. Since if men were only to worship God singly, and apart, it were more easy for them either to neglect it quite, or to corrupt it according to their various fancies, than when companies and bodies of men meet together.

It is therefore necessary for maintaining and advancing the true ends of religion, that there be times appointed for the service of God ; and that on those, there should be publick assemblies of such numbers of men, as can be conveniently brought together into one place. That is also a great means for preserving union, peace and love in the world. These days must not return so seldom, that the sense of religion which may have been begotten on one day, be quite worn off before another returns. Our minds. that are apt to be unsteddy and forgetful, must be frequently refreshed with the remembrance of those things that relate to God, and which must govern our lives and actions, and both restrain us from sinning against God, and also set us on to all the acts of virtue and godliness. Yet on the other hand, since our bodies have so many necessities that cannot be relieved without much hard labour, it was also necessary that those days for the service of God, should not come about too often ; least that thereby there should be such frequent interruptions.

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given to our affairs, that the business of life could not be well carried on. God therefore, who, as he is the master of all our time, having made us, and all things about us for our use, who is a gentle master, and lays on us no yoke, but what is *easy*, and who knows best what our natures can bear, and what is fittest both for body and mind, has here commanded that the 7th day should be *kept holy*; that is to say, separated from the common business of life, and dedicated to his service. And that God might give this commandment the more authority, it being so necessary a means for preserving religion in the world, and for keeping it pure, he thought fit so to carry on the creation of the world, that tho' he could at once have perfected the whole order of the creation, yet he chose rather to do it in a course of six days, than all at once, and all being finish'd, he rested on the 7th day; that by so great an example, the observation of a rest on that day might be recommended with the more authority to all mankind.

THERE are indeed other words added in the 5th of *Deuteronomy*, to those here read; *And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence thro' a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day.* But these related to the Jews only, and so were a more particular inforcement of it on them; but the consideration

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sideration of the *rest* after the creation, is universal, and relates to all mankind ; it being a true rule, that all laws are to be extended as far as the reason of them goes.

THIS consideration ought not to be made use of against the change of the 7th day from the Jewish *sabbath*, which is our saturday, to the *Lord's day*. For you may plainly perceive that the end of the law is, that a 7th part of our time should be separated from common employments, in order to our attending on the service of God ; that so religion may have a deeper root in us, and that we may be brought more frequently to look to our own ways, and to lift up our souls to God. In order to all this, it is all one in what part of the week this 7th day is reckoned, whether it be in the beginning or in the end of it.

SINCE then God had proposed his *own rest*, as the reason for which he commands us to *rest*, when he had finished that 2d, and to us, that *better creation of us in Christ Jesus* ; by raising him up from the dead, and so compleating our redemption, and calling us to a religion in which we should not only worship him as our Creator, but as being reconciled to us in his dear Son, *whom he has made the heir of all things*, and by *whom he will have us offer up our services and sacrifices to him*. It was highly suitable to the first design of sanctifying the seventh day, that, as a seventh day still puts

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Eph. 2. 10. Heb. 1. 2. 13. 5.

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us in mind of the creation, so this day should be so placed as likewise to remember us of this second *making of all things new in Jesus Christ*, who is over all God blessed for evermore.

WE find, that as the Apostles themselves met on this day, so they called upon the first Christians to meet together *on the first day of the week*, which was also at that time honoured with the name of the *Lord's day*, and has been ever since in all the ages of the Christian church observed, as the day dedicated to the service and worship of God, and to the celebrating the honour of him, whom God did on that day raise from the dead, and thereupon gave him all power both in heaven and in earth.

HAVING thus opened to you the ends of this commandment, and the reasons of it, and the small change made in it; it is fit in the next place to open to you the manner of *sanctifying* this day aright, so as to avoid all extreams of all hands; you are then to consider that our Saviour has taught us, that *the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: And, that it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day*. The Jews, to whom this commandment was frequently repeated in terms that imported much strictness, and a great severity on those that transgressed it, came to raise the observation of it to a superstitious niceness. They came as all
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2 Cor. 5. 17. Mar. 16. 9. Joh. 20. 1,
19. Acts. 20. 7. 1 Cor. 16. 2. Rev. 1.
10. Mat. 28. 18. Mat. 2. 27. Luk. 6. 9.

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hypocrites are always apt to do, to place all religion in those outward performances that had an appearance of great exactness in obeying the law punctually: And, therefore, they took occasion from the miracles that our Saviour wrought on the sabbath-day, and from his disciples plucking some ears of corn when they were hungry, to represent him as one that profaned the sabbath. But, since it has been already opened to you, that the end of the sabbath is to keep alive in the hearts of men a deep sense of our duty to God, and of all the obligations that religion puts us under, and not to load us with superstitious observances, or scrupulosities in smaller matters, it appears from thence, that only such an observation of the Lord's day is required, as tends to perfect and advance us in the service of God.

WE ought, indeed, to make the *sabbath our delight*, and to rejoice on that day, to put from us the common concerns of life, *Not speaking our own words, or doing our own ways*; that is, not letting our hearts run out into projects and cares relating to our own affairs, or wasting our time in unnecessary discourses concerning them; but in all this we ought not to burthen our minds with a load which we are not able to bear: But to rejoice in the liberty to which Christ has called us, who hath delivered us from this part of the Jewish bondage, and hath

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Matt. 12. 2. John 5. 16. Isa. 58. 13.

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told us, *That the sabbath was made for man,* and therefore a nice and scrupulous anxiety in small matters, favours more of the Jewish spirit, than of the Christian temper.

BUT, as you ought to beware of this extreme, so you are much more in danger of the other, of profaning this day, either by looking after your concerns, your husbandry and cattle, or other affairs more than is necessary ; or which is yet much worse, by reckoning that you are on this day absolved from your labours, that you may serve your lusts and pleasure with so much the more freedom : If the ceasing from labour is made an occasion to intemperance and disorder, to sloth and idleness, and to vice and debauchery ; this is plainly to turn the *grace of God into lasciviousness*. God did in the old testament reckon it among those blessings that he had heap'd on his people, that *He gave them his sabbaths to be a sign between him and them, that they might know that he was the Lord that sanctified them* ; this being, if well improved, so excellent a mean for setting on all the designs of religion ; so on the other hand this is a *walking contrary to God*, if instead of being the better for such blessings, we become the worse for them, and if instead of sanctifying the Lord's day beyond the other days of the week ; you profane it more than any of them : This is as it were to do a despite to the laws and commandments of God.

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Ezek. 20. 12.

Of observing the Sabbath. 37

THE proper ways of sanctifying this day are, 1st. The spending some considerable portions of the day in our secret meditations, prayers and studies, in which we ought to look back on the past week, and observe how far we have been endeavouring in it, to do our duty to God and our neighbour, wherein we have failed, what sins or errors we have been guilty of, what former vows and resolutions we have broken, into which of our former sins we have relapsed, or into what new ones we have fallen, whom we have any way wronged in word or in deed. All these things we ought to call to mind, that we may humbly confess them before God, be truly grieved for them and repent sincerely of them, by forsaking them, and entering into holy and firm resolutions, not to fall into the like any more : We ought also to observe what particular providences of God have occurred to us in the past week, either such as tend to awaken and quicken us, or such as oblige us to offer up praises and thanksgivings to God. Those who are not yet well instructed in religion should take pains also to increase their knowledge by reading, or causing to be read to them, such portions of scripture, or of other good books, as may give them some further instructions or awakening, in order to the working out of their *salvation with fear and trembling.*

WHEN a good man has been thus employing some part of the morning in fitting himself to

appear before God, then he is to go to the house of prayer, remembring that the scriptures join these two together. *Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary.* But you ought not to go thither only to see, or to be seen; or *to be as the way-side, on which the seed falls, but does not enter.* You ought to consider the prayers and praises of the church, as the publick services which you offer up to God, and in which you must remember what a terrible condemnation they fall under, who *draw near to God with their mouth, and honour him with their lips, when their hearts are far from him. They are given up to a hardness of heart, so that hearing they do not understand, and seeing they do not perceive, lest they should be converted, and God should heal them.* You ought therefore to join your hearts with your lips in every part of the worship; when you pronounce the confession of sins, you ought then to confess your secret ones to God; when the absolution is declared, you ought most humbly to beg your share in it; in the repeating the psalms and hymns you ought to raise up your souls to rejoice in God, for the great blessings that are commemorated in them; while the lessons are reading, you ought to observe what particular instruction, reproof, or consolation arises to you from any part of them; in the collects, but chiefly in the litany, you ought to

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Lev. 19. 30. Matt. 13. 19. Mat. 15. 8.
Isa. 6. 9, 10.

Of observing the Sabbath. 89

pour out your hearts to God for the graces and blessings which you ask of him ; in the thanksgiving you ought to join in your thoughts an humble acknowledgment of those mercies, which you have particularly met with from God. When you make *confession with your mouths* of your faith, you must be sure to join with it, *the belief of your hearts*, otherwise you lie to God, when you say you believe that to which your hearts do not consent : While the commandments are repeated, you ought to remember both your former sins, and the infirmities of your natures, together with the temptations to which you are exposed, and so your answer will be full, and arise out of a true sense of want, *both of mercy and of grace to help you in time of need.*

WHEN you hear sermons you ought particularly to observe what parts of scripture become by them more intelligible to you, that so you may read these afterwards with more profit ; you ought also to observe what sins are reprov'd in them, and what duties are exhorted to, or what resolutions of doubts or directions are given, in which you are more immediately concerned, that so you may lay these up in your hearts, and may reflect severely upon them ; you are not to hear sermons as men do that intend only to censure them, but as becomes those who are resolved to be the better for them ; and when you get home, you are to turn over and over a-

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Rom. 10. 10. Heb. 4. 16.

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gain in your thoughts, such passages in them as may have a good effect on your selves, in order to *your growing up in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

IF these rules ought to be minded by you every Lord's day, you ought to attend much more to them, on days of communion, in which you are called to a more immediate partaking of the death and sufferings, that is, of the body and blood of our Saviour, and to renew your vows to him. Then, when you are again to dedicate your selves to him, and to receive the fullest pledges of his love, you must awaken your minds to a greater seriousness, to more contrition for your sins, to more earnestness in your prayers, to greater firmness in your resolutions, to a greater fervor of charity in your intercessions for others, to a more full assurance of faith, and to more elevated acts of praise and thanksgiving to God for all his mercies, but above all, for that astonishing effect of his love to mankind, of sending his son into the world to save sinners, of giving him to the death for our sins, and of raising him again from the dead, and crowning him with glory and honour. Thus you ought to behave your selves in the house of God, in all the several parts of the publick worship; nor ought you to think it too hard a burthen to return a second time to evening prayer or sermon, you should rather rejoice that you may go often *to the house of God together*

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ther, for if you despise these solemn assemblies, you may thereby provoke God to visit you with a famine, *not of bread or of water, but of bearing the word of the Lord.*

WHEN the publick worship is ended, then every one of you ought, for some time, to recollect his thoughts, and to renew his vows and good resolutions, and from the remembrance of what you may have learnt, either from the word of God, or from the sermon, to raise in your minds such a sense of things as is agreeable thereunto. Masters of families ought also to bring their families together, to prayer, to the reading some portions of scripture, and other good books, particularly of that which is called, *The whole duty of man*; and, you ought to edify and admonish one another by singing of psalms, and by serious and godly discourses. It is also an act of charity highly becoming this day, to go and *visit the sick, or the widows and fatherless in their affliction*, to comfort the afflicted, to reconcile any differences that may be in your neighbourhood, and to do such other acts of love and kindness to those that are near you, as may not too much disturb your own devotion, but may tend to their good; by which, peace, kindness and love may be preserved among friends, neighbours and acquaintances. For, in so doing, you are serving of God, and advancing the true ends, as well as the honour of religion.

THUS,

Psalm 122. 1. Amos 8. 11.

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THUS, Good Christian brethren, you have heard the particular duties of this day set forth to you, by which you may perceive how faulty you are, and how generally God is dishonoured on this day ; the due observation of it is one of the chief means that God has appointed for carrying on the whole design of religion in the world ; so, on the other hand, the neglect of it is one of the chief occasions of that forgetting of God, that looseness and impiety that reigns so much among us ; for if men do not on that day look to their souls, and mind the concerns of religion, in which they are at leisure for it, and cannot set about their ordinary affairs ; how is it to be expected that they should mind it when their thoughts are distracted with their affairs, and their bodies are wearied out with labour ?

It is therefore to be reckoned one of God's greatest blessings to a nation, that he has *given them his sabbaths*, and those who despise this day, and *wish it were gone*, and think it is too great an interruption to their affairs, may provoke him to shut them out of his *rest*, into which he has entred, even out of that rest, or as the word is, *that keeping of sabbath which remains for the people of God.*

CONSIDER well, of how much importance your immortal souls are ; *what shall it profit you if you gain the whole world, and lose your own souls ?* Will you labour all the week long for
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Amos. 3. 5. Heb. 4. 9. Matt. 16. 26.

Of observing the Sabbath. 93

your bodies and bellies, and do you think it too much, to labour one day in seven for your souls, and for eternity ? Oh, think what a miserable thing it is for you to be ignorant, in the midst of so much light and knowledge as is laid before you, and that may be easily acquired by you, if you will but spend a few hours once a week in order to your own instruction ! If you will choose a wilful ignorance, you may provoke God to give you up to one that is unavoidable, by making your sun to go down, and delivering you up to that darkness in which you seem to delight, and if you will still harden your hearts, you may provoke him by his judgments to *make them fat and heavy* ; but if you will hearken to his voice, and apply your selves to the hearing and learning his laws, he will *make you to know wisdom* in the inward part ; he will by the assistances of his Grace, *so open your eyes, that you may behold the wonders of his law, and so quicken your hearts, that you may run the ways of his commandments : He will guide you while you are here with his council, and afterwards, he will receive you to glory.* Amen.

Pf. 51. 6. Pf. 119. 18, 32. Pf. 73. 24.

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S E R M O N VI.

Of Chastity.

H E B R E W S XIII. 4.

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled, but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

AS it was one of the ten commandments that were spoken by God himself, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*; so the punishment of it under the Jewish law, was likewise appointed by him: *And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death.* But tho' in the new testament there are no laws made of this nature, against this or any other sin, yet there are much more terrible denunciations made of the judgments of God against it. For as the author of our blessed religion,

Levit. 20. 10.

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religion, was in his own person, *holy, harmless, undefiled*; so he has most strictly charged us to be pure and *holy in all manner of conversation, as he who called us was holy*, without which we are assured *we shall not see the Lord*; and the *wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness*.

ONE part of the judgments of God against those that do not live answerably to their holy profession, is, that *God gives them up to uncleanness, and to vile affections*; and so odious were all the sins of the flesh to the holy apostles, that they charged the first Christians *not to keep company with any man that was called a brother, that is, a Christian, if he was a fornicator, a covetous man, an idolater, a railer, a drunkard, or an extortioner, and with such a one no not to eat*. St. Paul also warns us *not to deceive our selves, for neither fornicators, adulterers, thieves, covetous men, drunkards, revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God*. The same apostle reckoning up the works of the flesh, begins at *adultery, fornication, and uncleanness*, and concludes, *that they who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God*; and that therefore *they that are Christ's*, that is, true Christians, *have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts*. The same apostle does also most earnestly charge the *Ephesians* in these words;

Heb. 7. 26. 1 Pet. 1. 15. Heb. 12. 14.
Rom. 1. 24, 26. 1 Cor. 5. 11. 1 Cor. 6.
9. ver. 24. Gal. 5. 19.

words ; But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named amongst you, as becomes saints. And to avoid all approaches to it, he charges them to abstain from filthiness, foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient. By which is meant steps to impurity, with leud jests, and indecent discourses; to which he adds, *For this you know that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, or of God.* And because there were in those days, as well as in this corrupted age, some who made light of this sin, and perhaps scoffed at the judgments of God, which were declared against it; he says of these, *let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things, comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience; be not ye therefore partakers with them.* And the same things are repeated by him, in his epistle to the *Colossians*, ch. 3. v. 5, 6. and in his 2d epistle to the *Thessalonians*, ch. 4. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. he tells them, that as it was the will of God that they should abstain from fornication, so it was also the great means of preserving themselves pure, *even their sanctification*; and that tho' the worship of idolaters was commonly defiled with great licentiousness, and many disorders of this sort, yet God had called Christians not to uncleanness, but to holiness. And in the visions of St. John, the whoremongers

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Eph. 5. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Rev. 21. 8. Rev. 22. 15.

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wrongers are in two different places reckoned among those that are shut out of the new Jerusalem, and that shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

NOR did our Saviour only condemn acts of uncleanness, but he, being the author of a religion designed for the cleansing of our hearts, has carried the precept further in these words ; *Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not commit adultery : But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a Woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* In this he strikes at the root of sin which is in the heart ; for when lust is once conceived there, it *bringeth forth sin* ; and of this sin, it may more particularly be said, that *when it is finished, it bringeth forth death.* For Solomon, whose heart was corrupted by those impure desires, tells us from sad experience, that he who is enticed by a harlot, *goeth after her as an ox to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks ; till a dart strike thro' his liver ; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knows not that it is for his life.* And he concludes, *Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.* Now tho' there may seem to be an extreme severity in our Saviour's charging impure looks and desires with the sin of *adultery* ; yet this instead of

Matt. 5. 27. Jam. 1. 15. Prov. 7. 22, 23, 27.

of making the yoke of the commandment heavier, makes it really lighter; for it were much harder for us to maintain our purity, if we let our eyes and desires wander after forbidden objects, than it will be to stop the first motions to sin, and with holy Job, to *make a covenant with our eyes*, and upon that to say, *why then should I think upon a maid?*

St. Paul also useth this argument to persuade us to purity, that *the body is made not for fornication, but for the Lord*; that we are all *one body in Christ*, and therefore that our bodies are *the members of Christ*; that by this sin, those bodies that are *sanctified* come to be defiled, and that *our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in us*. And elsewhere he says, *that if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple we are*. Now if it is a matter that will give you horror if you saw the house of God defiled, by putting unclean beasts in it, or which is worse, if you saw the churches prostituted to be publick places of lewdness and vice, you ought according to St. Paul's reasoning, to esteem it a much more heinous thing if these living temples of God should be thus prophaned.

YE have thus far seen, good Christian brethren, that if we believe the holy scriptures,

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Job 31. 1. 1 Cor. 13. 15, 16, 17, 18,
19. 1 Cor. 3. 17.

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and take the new testament to be the rule of our life ; nothing can be more clear and exprefs, than that thefe fins are fo odious in the fight of God, that no man who lives in them, can have any part or portion in the mercies of God, but that he is of the number of thofe workers of iniquity, that are to be caft out *into outer darknefs, where there is weeping, wailing, and gnafhing of teeth for ever.* Thefe laws are fet us by a holy God, who is of *purser eyes than that he can behold iniquity*, and only the *pure in heart and life fhall fee him.* Nor can the fpotlefs lamb of God, fuffer any to follow him, who with the fwine love to wallow in this defilement. If you think thefe precepts hard, and thefe threatnings terrible, there is no help for it ; You muft govern your felves according to the doctrine of Chrift, or you muft renounce your Chriftianity, if you choofe rather to gratify your impure appetites and defires, than keep your bodies thus pure and holy. There is no reconciling them to our holy faith : You cannot be both the *members of Chrift, and the members of a harlot.*

THEREFORE do not flatter your felves with falfe notions, as if thefe were only dreadful words given out to fright you ; they are true, or all Chriftianity is only a cunningly deviſed fable : For there are no parts of the whole new testament more plain and exprefs, and lefs liable to any doubtful meaning than thefe are, that have been now delivered to you ; and therefore

fore if you believe that God has reveal'd his gospel, as the only mean by which we can fly from the wrath which is to come, when Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power : You must set your selves to the obedience of these precepts, that so cleansing your selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, ye may perfect holiness in the fear of God ; and glorifie him in your bodies as well as in your spirits, for ye have both of him, and ye are his, And not your own.

BUT if you will, besides all this that has been laid before you, of the wrath and judgments of God against these sins, consider the state of this world, and the order of it, if you will consider your temporal interest, as well as that which is eternal ; you will see many other reasons concurring to inforce the observance of these commandments, and obliging you to acknowledge, that they are *holy, just and good*. As for married persons, they have mutually given their faith to one another, by a solemn vow, and oath made in the presence of God ; so that in this sin both perjury and impurity meet together in the same action. The married man that lets his heart wander after other

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objects,

2 Theff. 1. 7, 8, 9. 2 Cor. 7. 1. 1 Cor. 6. 20.

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objects, neglects his own house, grows to loath his wife, and to hate his children. Consider you husbands, what you do in the words of Solomon, *lest you give your honour unto others, and your years unto the cruel; lest strangers be filled with your wealth, and your labours be in the house of a stranger: and you mourn at last, when your flesh and your body are consumed:* When you have nothing left you, but poverty and shame, rottenness, and loathsome, or painful diseases, together with a guilty conscience, more exhausted with the horrors of a vicious life, than the body, that is disfigured perhaps, or at least violently tormented with the remnants of those loose and unruly appetites.

FOLLOW therefore the advice of the wise man, *drink waters of thy own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well,* (a figure of speech, importing a man's living happily with his own wife;) *Let them be only thine own, and not strangers with thee: Let thy fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of thy youth, and be thou ravish'd always with her love: And why wilt thou my son be ravish'd with a strange woman? For the ways of man are before the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.* Flatter not yourselves with this, that your sins are secret, that no eye sees them: *Do not wait for the twilight, and because you have disguised your face, say, No eye shall see me;*

Prov. 5. 9, 10, 11. Ver. 15. 17, 18,
20. Job 18. 15. Psal. 139. 3, 5, 11, 12.

me; but remember that God *compasses your paths, and is acquainted with all your ways, and besets you before and behind*; and tho' you may foolishly say, *surely the darkness shall cover me, yet even the night shall be light about you: yea, the darkness hideth not from him, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to him.* All these stollen pleasures, that are now so sweet to you, when your iniquities shall compass you about, will make you to possess many wearisome days and nights; when, between a wasted body, and a guilty mind, a ruin'd fortune, and a broken family, you will feel the arrows of the Almighty piercing you, and the poison of them drinking up your spirits: When your sins have left you nothing in the decays of nature, but shame and infection, and tribulation and anguish, then, when it is too late, you will cry to God, and think that you are repenting of your sins, after they have left you, and not you them, and that you have forsaken them, not being able to live any longer in them.

Oh foolish people, and unwise! Why will you not in time consider what shall the end of all these things be? Ye *Adulteresses*, that against the decencies of your nature, and that modesty, which is the particular ornament of your sex, forget the vows of marriage, and your covenant with your God; consider what you lose when you cast off your innocence, and make your selves to be the reproach of your husbands,

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husbands, to whom you should be a crown, and draw infamy on your children, as being a spurious and uncertain brood; you rob your husbands of their honour, your children of their fame, and your selves of your reputation and credit: You dissolve the tie of marriage, and the kindness of a married state: You even by an indecent and unchaste deportment, raise terrible disquiets in the minds of your husbands, for *jealousie is the rage of a man*, it provoketh a revenge, that often cannot be appeased, but with blood, either that of the injur'd husband, or of the object of his jealousy, and the guilt of his blood lies chiefly on the woman, whose unchaste deportment has kindled the furious passion. Your sin is often robbery, as well as it is adultery, and perjury, when the child of one man inherits the estate of another, upon whom he is put, and who carries away either the whole, or at least his share in an inheritance that of right belongs to others.

CONSIDER this all ye that defile the marriage bed, and think to face it out before the world, either with the hypocritical shews of piety, or with a loud and clamorous boldness: Remember you have to do with God, *who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness*, and who will perhaps raise such horrors in your souls, that you will not be able to bear your own burden, but become a terror to your selves, as well as a reproach to all that belong to you.

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Prov. 6. 34.

As for those who have perhaps some apprehensions of the guilt of *defiling the marriage bed*; and therefore that they may have less remorse for the free range of pleasure, in which they intend to live, will not enter into a married state, but deny themselves in no appetite, and so live loose and ungovern'd lives; such persons, *who walk in the ways of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes, must remember, that for all these things God will bring them into judgment.* Consider that these pleasures of sin, that are but for a season, will waste your strength, expose your life and health to many dangers, and above all, corrupt your minds: You will be often the instruments of tempting others to sin, by which you have a double guilt upon you, both your own, and that of the person enticed by you: You will be the instruments of giving being to illegitimated issue, who are born to inherit shame and contempt, poverty and misery, and you refuse to follow the method that God has appointed for the increase of mankind, but choose that which your brutal appetites suggest to you. You who follow forbidden pleasures, do run your selves into such a shameful course of life, that you will be often tempted, not only to deny and disown it; but perhaps to do it, even with oaths and imprecations. For there is a fatal connection of sins one with another. Ill actions give commonly suspicions, out of which challenges and accusations

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sations do oft arise, and these cannot be thrown off but by bold denials, and impudent falsehoods, which are often confirm'd by bloody oaths.

INJUSTICES of all sorts do also arise out of this ill course of life. Persons do often promise themselves to one another, which they do as often break, and so they carry a curse with them into any marriage, which they may afterwards contract. In one Word, these men do *walk after the flesh, and not after the spirit*, who prefer their own inordinate affections to the laws of God, and to the precepts of the gospel. For St. Paul has expressly said, that to avoid fornication, every man ought to have his own wife, and every woman her own husband; and if any cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.

THEREFORE, dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against your souls; remember that you are redeemed from your vain conversation: Be ye therefore as obedient children, not fashioning your selves according to your former lusts. Remember that whoredom and wine take away the heart: And that by the means of a *whorish woman a man is brought to a morsel of bread*; therefore keep you from the evil woman, and from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Lust not after her beauty in thy heart, neither let her take thee with her eyelids:

1 Cor. 7. 2, 9. 1 Pet. 2. 11. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. Hof. 4. 11. Prov. 6. 24, 25, 26.

lids : For the Woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and whose hands are bands, is more bitter than death. Whoso pleaseth God, shall escape from her ; but the sinner shall be taken by her. And as it is said elsewhere by the the same wise man, He that is abhorred of the Lord, shall fall into this pit.

LAY these things to heart seriously, and in time, before you have purchased the knowledge of them at too dear a rate. Consider further, that if such advices were given by Solomon, under the old dispensation, in which, by reason of the infirmity of the *Jewish* nation, and for the hardness of their hearts many things were dispensed with to them, certainly they are much more binding to us Christians, who are called to so high a degree of purity ; that it is not enough for us to be *blameless and harmless, and without rebuke*, but we are commanded to walk *as the sons of God, and to shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.* It is the peculiar character of Christianity, that it obliges us to *mortifie our bodies, to crucifie the flesh, to put off the old man with his deeds, and to put on the new man ;* so that the same mind may be in us that was in Christ Jesus : We must *abstain even from all appearance of evil ;* which is set forth in this noble figure, *hating even the garment that is spotted by the flesh ;*

Eccles. 7. 26. Prov. 22. 14. Phil. 2.
15. Gal. 5. 9, 10. Phil. 2. 5. 1 Theff.
5. 22. Jude 23.

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flesh; that imports our abhorring every approach to any degree of defilement.

If you think that these things are difficult, and not easy for flesh and blood, that is not to be denied: But if you follow the methods laid before you in the scriptures, you will find the difficulty grow daily much less; nor, indeed, ought you to think it hard, if you are bound to be at some pains for the purifying and saving of your souls: You are willing to put yourselves to trouble for every thing else: The learning of a trade, the following of husbandry, the life of a soldier, are all things of great difficulty; and that yield a small reward; and yet men submit themselves to much toil and drudgery in every one of these. Most mens diversions and pleasures put them to much trouble; and it is not to be imagin'd, that so great a thing as eternal life and glory should be come at, without any difficulty or labour.

YET after all, the labour is not so great but that it may be overcome. If men will by *rioting and drunkenness*, by sloth and idleness, and by their exposing themselves to such temptations, which they know they may easily avoid or resist in the beginning of them, if they watch over themselves: If I say they will by such methods *be laying in provision for the flesh, and for its lusts and affections*, then when their appetites are thus taken care of by them, no wonder if they are high and unruly; but if you will learn to be sober, and temperate, and
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if you study by fasting often to subdue the body, if you fly from all that company, and those occasions that betray you into these sins, keeping yourself with all care from the first steps, in which the appetite is yet but weak and feeble, and if you will follow the duties of your vocation with care and application, so that you may employ your thoughts and your time in them, and if you choose such diversions for you, as do not betray you into these temptations, then you will find it much easier to resist or avoid them.

THE heathens understood this, and even one of the leudest of their poets tells us, that the strength and arts of lusts perish, if men give over their idleness, and take care to be well employed.

IN the next place, you ought to follow the rule of religion, and to choose such meet-helps for you, with whom you may hope to live happily together; for where the husband and the wife are knit to one another with the bonds of virtue and religion, and love one another in the Lord; as this is a kind of a heaven upon earth, so it secures their hearts from impure and vagrant desires, as long as they are so closely united together.

IN order to this end, you ought to be careful in the choice you make in marrying yourselves, or your children, that you may not sacrifice both the peace and purity of your lives, to those base considerations, upon which many of those, even that pass for wise persons, in the

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esteem of the world, choose a consort, and sell themselves or their children for a little money, or some other secular ends, but those who would *marry in the Lord*, that is, as becomes Christians, ought to make such a choice, that in the company of the person, with whom they are to lead their lives they may hope to serve God, and to save their souls.

THEREFORE the virtue and piety of the person, ought to be the first and chief thing to be look'd at, tho' it is not to be deny'd, but that other considerations ought likewise to have their share in the choice. But when regard is only had to wealth, or other carnal ends, then the marriage will be soon repented of, and the bed will come to be loath'd, and out of this arise not only brawlings and contention, but a dissolution of that sacred faith.

To the sins of our fathers, this age has added the open giving up of marriages, and the parties allowing themselves, that which no religion nor law can allow them, to live impudently in a consorship with other persons, as if they were married to them: which is a degree of wickedness, that we have added to the former measure of our sins, which God knows without this was measure heapt up, or running over: God grant it may not be the *filling up the measure of our fathers*; and, That God who has threatned, *that he will be a swift witness against the adulterers, and the false swearing*;

Matt. 23. 32. Mal. 3. 5.

swearing ; do not for the sake of those breakers of wedlock, who become guilty of both these sins at once, arise *against this nation to judgment*, because of those sins, of which men are so far from being ashamed, that they commit them openly, and in the sight of the sun.

To conclude, let every man pray earnestly to God to furnish him inwardly with his Grace, to subdue and mortify this body of sin, with all its lusts and deeds : And you may be well assur'd, that to such as do beg this earnestly of him ; and, that do likewise use all those means, which he has appointed for keeping them pure and undefiled ; he who *gives liberally to all men, and upbraideth no man*, will either grant continence, which St. Paul calls a *special gift of God, that indeed every man hath not*, or to such whom by not granting this, he calls to a married state, which is call'd in the text *honourable in all men* ; he will grant a blessing in their marriage : for a good wife is said to be the gift of God, *a prudent wife is from the Lord*, and God, *from whom cometh down every good gift and every perfect gift*, will certainly grant to all such as do earnestly seek to him, either the one or the other of these gifts, as he sees it may be best for them. Therefore, to end all, in the Words of the same apostle. *Lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness, the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*

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1 Cor. 7. 7. Prov. 19. 14.

S E R M O N VII.

Of Drunkenness.

EPHESIANS V. 18.

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the spirit.

GOD, as he has given us bodies, subject to many infirmities and necessities; so he has put us in a world well stored with all those supplies, that are necessary to support, or even to gratify our nature: He not only affords us those things that we need, and without which we cannot subsist; but gives us also every thing that may render life comfortable to us; and, that may give our bodies such an active vivacity, as may make them fit instruments for our minds to work with.

EVERY sin is in some respect contrary to us, and to some part or power belonging to us. Some sins are mischievous to our bodies, others

are hurtful to our souls ; some waste our fortunes, and others ruin our reputation ; some are bad in their own nature, and others are attended with fatal consequences ; but the sin of drunkenness has this peculiar to it ; that it is equally hurtful both to soul and body ; and, that it is as bad in itself, as in its consequences, and has as ill an influence on human society, as on those who are corrupted by it.

IF one should go about to set before you all the ill characters of this vice, the subject would be large ; and the description would become so ghastly, that, if the truth of every particular did not shew itself but too visibly, and in too many instances round about us, it would look so extravagant, that one must wonder how it is possible, that human nature should have sunk into so base and so infamous a vice, and to such a hurtful and desperate corruption as this is.

NOTHING does more wear the body, and waste life and strength than drunkenness does : It fires the blood, and weakens the stomach : It sometimes puts a speedy end to life, either by fevers or other diseases that are critical, or by other fatal accidents, to which a man, that has neither sense enough in his head, nor strength enough in his limbs to preserve himself, is exposed ; and if one has a constitution so strong, or falls into such happy circumstances, that he escapes this, yet the certain, tho' slow wastes that these disorders make upon him, do disfigure his face, and enfeeble both his vitals, and
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his limbs; so that while his face carries the prints of that flame, there is a dead coldness within, and a trembling spread over all the joints.

AGE wastes him apace, and seldom do such men live out half their days; if a vast strength of nature carries one on to old age, notwithstanding all those attempts to cut them short; yet gout and other infirmities are severe reckonings, that they must pay for those unruly liberties, which they have allow'd themselves. From this vice likewise, arise many quarrels, which falling to be among those, whose passions are inflam'd, while their reason is extinguish'd, do often end fatally.

THIS is the great corrupter of young persons, who are drawn in and ensnared by the mirth and gaiety that accompany it, and out of this ill disposition both of body and mind, arise many irregularities, which are very fully set forth by the wise man, in these words. *Who hath wee? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, that go to seek the mixt wine.* Therefore he adds, *Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright: At the last, it biteth like a serpent, it stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall*

Prov. 23. 29. to the end.

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shall utter perverse things. Both swearing and leudness being the ordinary effects of it. *Yea thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.* A drunken man being exposed to so many dangers which he can neither foresee nor prevent.

IN the next place, nothing does more waste a man's time and fortune than drunkenness: It makes him forget both God, himself, and his neighbour; while that time which he should imploy, either for the improving his mind, the looking after his affairs, or the doing good to others, is thrown away in those brutal excesses; so that as the wise man says, *the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty, and drowsiness (or the laziness which naturally follows them) shall cloath a man with rags.* The same wise man by way of derision says, *give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts: Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.* But in opposition to that he says, *it is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings, to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.* For, when those who owe much to mankind, give themselves to these disorders, all the order of the world and of humane society is lost, while they, who should maintain it, are, as it were, enchanted

Pro. 23. 27. Pro. 31. 6, 7. ver. 4. 5.

chantered with the witchcrafts of the cup. For, as the prophet *Hosea* says, *whoredom and wine, and new wine, take away the heart*, and therefore, *Solomon* reckons it one of the special blessings of a land, *when their princes eat in due season, for strength and not for drunkenness*. That drinking brings on such as are corrupted by it, insensibly, a sloth, and a carelessness of every thing else, by which men first neglect, and then ruin their affairs; has but too much proof in all your observation.

It is no less notorious that this makes men insensible of the concerns of their families, and wanting in all the respects due to their kindred, friends, or neighbours; a drunken companion being preferred to them all, and suretiship for him, eating up, but too often, their whole substance.

BUT the last and chief consideration, in which the hatefulness of this vice appears, is that our reason and all the powers of our souls, fall under such disorders, either so total a depression, or such unruly violences, that a man is really no more a man, while he is under the power of wine or strong drink, but is transformed into a beast or a madman. Our reason is the image of God in us, it is the glory of our nature, and the guide of our life. Meat and drink are plentifully supplied to us from the creation of God, that by these our bodies may be kept in a state fit to serve our minds. Now when men abuse these by excess, they not only waste and misapply the good creatures of God,
which

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which might have relieved the extreme necessities of some who languish under great want; but do likewise contradict the ends of nature, in loading themselves so that they have no more the free use of their reason, and putting them into such a state, that for many hours a drunken man is either an extravagant and ridiculous creature, exposed to much scorn by his impertinent frolicks, and other silly and apish tricks, or he is apt to be fired out of measure, so that any thing sets his passions a going, and then oaths and curses fly perpetually from him; besides other outrageous violences, into which, without any sort of provocation, his inflamed spirits do throw him: The most harmless effect of drunkenness with relation to a man's reason, is to be totally deprived of the use of it, to be heavy and so overcharged with sleep, that he is capable of no lively action or motion; but is stupified and besotted all the while that that lethargick vapour is in his head: If he is forced either to ride or walk, chiefly if it be in dangerous paths, or to go up and down stairs, he runs so great a hazard, either of losing his life, or of disjointing or breaking his limbs, that tho' we see many dismal instances of these things; yet it is rather to be wondred at, that we see no more of them; men in such a state being neither able to see their danger nor to avoid it.

THESE are all things, with which you must needs be so well acquainted by daily observation,

tion, that it is to no purpose to enlarge on particulars. Shall I need to put you in mind of the extravagant state in which drunkenness exposed *Noah* to the scorn of his son and grandson, *Ham* and *Canaan*, and which gave occasion to the pious tenderness of *Shem* and *Japhet*? Or, shall I tell the more dismal effect it had upon *Lot*, when he, so soon after he had seen one of the terriblest evidences that ever was given of God's punishing unnatural appetites, in the fire that fell down from heaven and consumed *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, was yet, by the poison of too much wine, so far intoxicated, that he fell into the repeated crimes of forbidden and unnatural appetites, tho' of another sort. But, here I must add one thing, that tho' our reasons being so clouded with these vapours, we are no more the masters of our own actions, and so, in a strict sense, have no liberty in committing such acts of folly and madness, as may then come in our way; yet this does not at all excuse us from the guilt of sins so committed, as it does a mad-man or a fool: For these by being born defective and unhappy, have in their misfortunes an excuse for the actions which they may commit: But he who sacrifices his reason to his appetite, and by his own fault brings himself into so miserable a state, is justly punishable, not only for all the evils that he really commits, but is even to account for all those

Gen. 9. 21. Gen. 19. 31.

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those which he might have committed, since he did put himself into such a condition, that his passions were exalted above their pitch, while his reason was so far sunk, that it could no more govern either them or himself: And thus, whereas the chief study of every wise and good man ought to be to perfect his reason, and to raise his nature as high as possibly he can; a drunkard debases and depresses his all he can.

SOME men of stronger heads, will, perhaps, think that they are not concerned in all this, because they can bear their charge, so that it has no visible effect on them: There is a special curse in scripture, not only on those that give themselves to drunkenness in these words, *Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink, that continue until night, till wine inflame them*, but in the same chapter there is another special curse upon those I have now named, *Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink*. Those of stronger heads, do commonly value themselves upon it: And for the most part they go as far as their strength can carry them: And so they leave many, whom they engage with them to drink, in their vomit and defilement: And become the plagues of the places where they live: And are the instruments of first corrupting all about them, tempting them to waste their own strength, which, tho' it is inferior to theirs,
yet

Isa. 5. 11. Ver. 22.

yet by a sort of cursed pride and affectation they court the reputation of being esteemed strong to drink, so they make a quicker progress in the wasting their strength, when they are in the hands of those mighty drunkards: These men do also carry their excesses so far, that, at last, they are sure to get the better of their strength and constitution; and, in conclusion, after the force of their stomach is overcome by the many returns of those unnatural fits, their heads become so weak, that none are sooner overtaken than they.

THUS, It appears by a great variety of considerations, that drunkenness carries with it a complication of plagues, that are equally destructive to soul and body. But, there is another species of drunkenness, that may, perhaps, seem not so criminal, because it is not attended with so many fatal symptoms, and that is, of those who tho' they do not carry their excess to so high an extravagance as to be quite dosed or drowned in it, and so think themselves without the reach of all the heavy charge that falls upon it, yet do give themselves to a habitual drinking of wine or strong liquor, when their bodies do in no manner require it. It is thought a decent and hospitable way of entertaining friends to be at every turn putting another glass in their hands; and without this, they say, the conversation would grow heavy, and the master of the house would be thought too great a manager of his liquor. But, besides, that

waste of time and of God's good creatures, there is, by the means of such tipling, an excessive heat put in the Blood, which does insensibly waste nature, and makes it to need that addition of flame too much, so that without it, nature is too cold, and with it, it is too hot: this brings on a dosing, and tho' such persons may be obliged by their circumstances, or some other considerations to preserve themselves from scandalous disorders, yet they put themselves in the way to be overcome, they grow to love their cups, they come to need them, and not to be able to be without them, and this, by a long and slow course of such tipling, will both corrupt men's health, and bring an habitual sottishness and feebleness on their minds.

To all these considerations, that arise both from the nature of our souls and bodies, against this vice, there is another strong one, which arises from the nature and Precepts of the christian religion. When St. *Paul* reckons up the works of darkness, in which the *Romans* had lived, while they were yet heathens, and in opposition to which, they were obliged to walk, being Christians, he begins with this, *Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness; not in chambering and wantonness; not in strife and envy.* And pursuant to this, the same Apostle carrying on the figure of comparing the *gospel* to *light*, and of heathenism to *darkness*, writes thus to the *Thessalonians*

Rom. 13. 13. 1 Theff. 5. 7, 8. Luke 21. 34.

ans, *They that be drunken, are drunken in the night; but let us, who are of the day be sober: And when our Saviour charges us to prepare for the great day, he gives us this particular caution; Take heed to your selves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life; and so that day come upon you unawares.* St. Paul also reckons drunkards among those that shall not inherit the kingdom of God; and drunkenness among the works of the flesh; and says, *That those who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God:* And even that lower degree of this vice, of loving wine, and being strong to drink, is also marked out as an indecency, that is extremely misbecoming churchmen. *Deacons* ought to be such as are not given to much wine, and *bishops* should not at all be given to wine. From which *Timothy* was so averse, that St. Paul thought it necessary to require him to drink a little wine for his frequent infirmities. But besides all these special rules, taken from several passages of the new testament, there is a more general consideration, which shews how contrary this Sin is to the spirit and design of the gospel; which directs us to mortify our bodies with the lusts and affections thereof, to subdue all our appetites, to crucify the old man; and in a word, to bring our bodies into subjection to our minds: This ap-

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1 Cor. 6. 10. Gal. 5. 21. 1 Tim. 3. 3, 8. 1 Tim. 5. 23.

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pears in so many places of the new testament, that you cannot but have observed, that its main design, is to make us consider our selves as pilgrims here on earth, to remember daily that we must leave this world, and therefore to be always preparing for another: We are called on to fast, and pray often; to *live after the spirit, and to walk according to it*; to be so far from overcharging our bodies with excessive provision for its irregular appetites and desires, that we should endeavour to starve these by withdrawing from them as much as our state of health and life will permit, all unnecessary gratifications.

THESE are the rules, and this is the spirit of the gospel: So that if we consider this whole matter, either as we are men or as we Christians, we will find our selves compassed about with authorities and arguments of all sorts deterring us from it.

BUT after all, what can we think, or what can we say, of the age we live in? In which this corruption has spread itself so universally, over all ranks and sorts of persons, that there are scarce any to be found that have escaped it.

SOME of a more brutal sort are overcome with the mere love of the liquor, tho' this appears so shameful an excess, that there are scarce any who will own it. This is to profess a man to be so much a beast, that he can sacrifice all that is valuable to him to a mere depravedness
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of lust : Yet if poison could be prepared so, as to be ever so sweet and grateful to the taste, few would be so mad as to delight in it, if they knew its poisonous quality : And as poisons that work slowly are as certain destroyers of our being, as those that have a quicker operation ; so tho' this disorder is not always a quick poison, which sometimes it is ; yet it is always a sure, and sometimes a strong one, by the violent pains and diseases which it occasions.

SOME know not how to dispose of their time, being bred to nothing, and scarce capable of any thing : And therefore, out of meer idleness, to help them off with their time, they ease themselves of that burden, by running into those extravagancies, in which days and nights run away apace. This is to bring one fault out of another : No man having been so neglected in his education, but that he may find somewhat to do, if he will : He can look to his own affairs, he can apply himself to some piece of industry, or frugality : He can find out some good company to converse with, and some occasions, in which he may do some good to others : In short, every man that has a mind to it, may imploy his time to some good purpose or another : And he had better sleep or do nothing than run into such excesses, as will render him, indeed, incapable of growing wiser, or becoming good for any thing.

To some, a pleasant conversation has a charm which they cannot resist, and this must be in-

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liven'd and refreshed with wine or strong drink ; but it is strange, that men cannot be merry, without becoming mad in their mirth ? Is there no measure to such folly ? Or cannot they find other methods of diverting themselves, besides those that must have such a fatal conclusion ? For certainly, of such mirth, it may well be said, that *the end of that mirth is heaviness*, to play with ones health and life, with ones fortune and reputation, and above all, with ones soul and with eternity, is a madness beyond any thing in *bedlam* ; and yet these men pretend to wit and sense.

SOME are carried, even against their own inclinations, meerly by ill example and custom ; and, that they may become more compliant to others, they practise upon themselves, and overcome, perhaps, a natural Aversion, which they find, both in their constitution and inclination, to those disorders, in which they continue, till they have, at least, lessen'd their antipathy to them ; if they cannot quite reconcile themselves to them ; and tho' every new fit gives them new head-achs ; yet they go on, till by custom they become familiar to them. This is a strange degree of perverseness, when men will become in some sort martyrs for their vice ; and will rather suffer much, than not become strong to sin. These very men would think they had a hard lot, if they were obliged to endure so much in the practice of any duty of religion or virtue.

BUT

BUT can the dissolute practices of bad men change the nature of things? They may grow less shameful and reproachful by being common; but they are not the less evil in themselves; and it is a strange meanness and feebleness of mind, if, because others are irregular and extravagant, a man should be ashamed of being wise or sober.

SOME fancy they will not be thought hospitable or free-hearted, if they let their friends part with them, without sending both them and their servants away intoxicated. But this is in itself a very unsuitable return of the civility of a visit; when one endeavours to destroy the health of him, that in kindness comes to see him, and puts him in great Danger, especially, if he is to ride home. The imputation of narrowness or covetousness may well be carried off by ones charity to the poor, or generosity to his tenants, or to any unfortunate debtor: These are noble instances of true goodness, and of a largeness of soul, by which other persons are both edified and relieved: So a man may be as sober as he pleases, and yet wipe off all the censures of the rout of drunkards, with all the advantages that he can desire. And thus you see, how poor all those excuses are, that this mad sort of people make use of, for palliating such an enormous practice; which spreads a poison of such an extent over mankind; and yet, alas! What is to be said, when we see, that this vice has so generally corrupted the age we live in, that scarce
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any thing can be done, or any design carried on with any hope of success, but as men are engag'd or wrought on by riot and excess? How far are we from being *Christians*, when we are not so much as *Men*, but degenerate into so low a degree of Brutality? And how desperate is this wickedness, that kills both soul and body at once, and has so poyson'd all ranks of men amongst us? *But be ye sober and vigilant, because* (in order to the tempting you to this sin, in particular) *you adversary, the Devil, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.* God of his mercy preserve you both from it and from him, *To God be all honour and glory for ever.* Amen.

1 Pet. i. 5.

S E R.

SERMON VIII.

Preached in *Newgate*, before the Lord
RUSSEL, the day before he suffered.

REVELATIONS XIV. 13.

*And I heard a voice from heaven,
saying unto me write, blessed are
the dead, which die in the Lord,
yea, saith the spirit, that they may
rest from their labours, and their
works do follow them.*

THERE is nothing more apt to impose
on us than false names and notions;
and among these, that of *Death*, makes
the greatest impression on us. We ought in-
deed, to consider our *Death*, if we are in a
good state, rather as a birth, than a *Death*. If
new-born children could make reflections, what

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a change do they pass through, when born from a dark prison, to light, and liberty? yet in a strictness of speech, they die to their former state, tho' they are born to a better. So one that dies well, he does not so much die, as he is changed, and is born to a much better state. And as the child breaks out of those foldings in which it was wrapt in the womb, so he drops a dull heavy body, and begins a life of another sort. Indeed, if a good man did consider well what this life and the next are, he must grow so weary of the one, and long so for the other; that if it were not for that natural love to life that is planted in us, he could scarce hold out. A love of life is a necessary ingredient in our natures, otherwise, wise and good men could scarce endure the trouble of living, but would be digging for the grave, and rejoyce when they should find it. So that the desire of life, being for wise and good ends rooted in our natures, no wonder if a man starts, and finds some aversions and misgivings of heart, now and then, when he sees death coming on him, especially, when it comes with pomp and solemnity; and that his sense and apprehensions of it are entire and free, being neither oppress'd with sickness, nor transported with pain, or any other misery. Therefore it is necessary that there should be more than ordinary supports to bear up a man that carries so much weight on him. Our Saviour himself, that had all the innocent infirmities of our nature in him, felt this, and an
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angel came and comforted him ; and in my text, here is great ground of comfort assured to all that die in the Lord.

THIS is not an ordinary portion of scripture, written at large with the rest, but has an extraordinary preamble, and is written upon a particular direction. *I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me write.*

AND the first part of the period being written, an approbation is added, together with a redoubling of the grounds of comfort that are here proposed ; *yea, saith the spirit.* And they who die thus, have not only a general assurance of blessedness, but a present one, *from henceforth.* The grounds of that blessedness are added. There is in it, both a rest, and a reward. This blessedness comes not on all that die, but only on those that *die in the Lord.* This in the strictness of the phrase is to be understood of those, that die martyrs upon the account of religion ; but in a more enlarged sense it may be applied to all that die in a good state, and are truly Christians ; which is often expressed in scripture, by the phrase of *being in Christ.* For the former, it indeed is the greatest and noblest way of dying ; for since a man must once die, what is so glorious as to die on so honourable an account, where a man may expect both the greatest assistances in his death, and the vastest rewards after it ? And if the notions of dying for one's king, or country, or friend be such, that the greatest men have
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preferred these to all sorts of death whatsoever : How much a greater thing is it to die for God, for our Saviour, and for our religion ? But the comfort of this expression is not to be so narrowed, that such only should fall within it. To die *in the Lord*, is to die *being in Christ* ; and and the easie way of finding out whether we *are in Christ*, is the turning the expression thus, to see if *Christ is in us* : That is, if we are acted by such a spirit as was in Christ.

LET us then consider the characters of the spirit of Christ, as they are recorded in the gospel at the time of his death, by which one may find it out, whether that same spirit is in himself. Our Saviour foresaw what was coming on him, and had all the natural aversion to it, that could consist with his submission to the will of God ; he was in an agony, and prayed that it *might pass from him*, yet he resigned himself up to *the will of his Father*. He was betrayed by one disciple, unlawfully defended by another, then forsaken by all, and denied by one. He was hurried from court, to court, and treated with great indignities, and much malice, false witnesses swore against him, and he was condemned as a blasphemer, and was put to death in a most infamous and cruel manner. Yet during all this, we see in him a perfect resignation to the will of God ; no upbraidings, nor sharpness of speech to his enemies. On the contrary, as he was silent when they accused him, so he prayed for them when they crucified him ; and expressed

expressed both the best disposition to think well of what they did, *they know not what they do*; and the tenderest charity, *Father, forgive them*. He shewed likewise, that the tenderness and affections of our nature were still in him, by recommending his mother and friend to one another. He reprov'd his disciple that had unlawfully defended him; and by a look full of authority, as well as mercy, he recover'd him. when he had denied him. And when he was under those inward agonies, that put him into a sweat of blood, and were afterwards termed by him, *God's forsaking him*, he still continued in his resignation and confidence in God, and said, *not my will, but thy will be done*, and *my God, my God*, and in conclusion, he commended his spirit into the hands of God.

By some conformity to these things, one is to gather, whether he is *in the Lord* or not. If he finds a patient submission to the will of God so strong, that tho' it does not quite overcome the natural love of life, yet it makes him bend under the other: If the failings of friends, and sharpness of enemies raises no hatred or indignation; if one would not be preserved by unlawful means; if one can pray for, and think as well as in reason he ought to do of his enemies: if one hath all the just tendernesses to his relations, and yet can part with them: And in a word, if one continues still trusting in God, and commending his spirit into his hands, then he may certainly conclude, that the spirit of

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Christ is in him, and by consequence that he *dies in the Lord*. And in this one is not to let himself be disquieted with scruples, tho' he should not be at all times the same; and tho' one could not raise always such perfect acts as he would wish to do; for God will judge us according to the temper of our minds, and the course of our lives; and not take advantage against us, like an enemy, upon every stumble or defect: He is infinitely gracious; and has the bowels of a father, and so will make allowances for the weaknesses, when he sees the sincerity of his children.

BUT the next thing to be consider'd is, the time when those that die in the Lord shall enter upon their blessedness: *It is from henceforth*, presently after death; according to that, *to day thou shalt be with me in paradise*. There will be a vast addition to our happiness after the solemn judgment that shall pass at the great day: And the scripture speaks of the resurrection of our bodies, as a consummation of our blessedness; but that is not the beginning of it: As we pass out of our bodies, we enter into a state of happiness, that is sometimes called our *rest*, sometimes *Abraham's bosom*. There is no dull sleep, or cessation from action that falls between; but as a child that is born, immediately has light and liberty, and the free use of its senses; yet there is after that a growth and progress in his state, tho' the first step into it is a vast happiness beyond what he could have had
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in his mother's belly: So, tho' the first moment of this change, is a strange transition from a miserable low estate, to a glorious and blessed one, yet there may be a progress and increase of our happiness eternally. It is great comfort, that at the first moment we shall have as much as shall make us truly blessed, for it shall begin immediately, *from henceforth*.

We are next to consider wherein this blessedness consists. We have here two hints given us by which we may judge of it. The first is, *It is a rest from labour*. The second is, *It is a reward of our works*. Life here is a continual labour, and all the business, yea all the pleasure of life is labour, and a *fore travel that God has given to the sons of men*. Our bodies subject us to many cares and anxieties, in acquiring or managing what is necessary for the support of our selves, or those that shall come after us. Many seeds of diseases and pains make this labour more bitter, especially if pains grow fix'd, which is often the portion of old age. We labour much in the midst of a false, and wicked and foolish world; and what by reason of the errors of those we love, or the violences of our enemies, we labour under many uneasy thoughts; and our labour this way, is not only from what we feel at present, but from the prospect of what we apprehend. But we have yet more uneasy labours: We have the seeds of many corrupt appetites and passions in us, which will be raising many ill thoughts

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within us; and these, if favourable opportunities offer, will be often carrying us either into ill things, or at least so near them, that a man's life is a continual labour this way. When one looks back, and sees in how many things he has sinn'd, and does not know but he may return again to the like sins, here is a great labour to a good soul, to be still lamenting past sins, and to be in fear of new ones, and to be feeling many things still in one's mind that he hates, and for which he abhors himself. The labour of knowledge is another of the difficulties of life; it is hard to raise our thoughts to know any thing right. Our notions are also so dark, so defective, and so uncertain, that often we know not what to make of them; so that the labour of acquiring knowledge, and the fruitlessness of it when acquir'd, must needs make rest from that labour easie.

FINALLY, the labour of being truly good is also a great one; the mind sometimes riseth up to high thoughts and an excellent temper: but it cannot hold it long: Sleep, business, or a weakness of spirit that cannot be long fixed on one thing, fall in so, that we soon lose that good temper. In some happy moments we are as it were raised above ourselves, but that will pass over, and cannot be so easily recover'd. If we consider the whole of life, with all the advantages it can have, both our bodies and minds are here subjected to vast labour and restlessness, and to a perpetual return of it: One uneasy
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part is no sooner over than another succeeds. We are travelling, and go a journey with all the inconveniencies possible ; and therefore the sight of home, and the hopes of rest, especially when they come so near us, that instead of reckoning by days, we reckon by hours, should fill our hearts with joy, and make us *lift up our heads* because our deliverance draweth nigh. Then shall we be at rest and cease from all cares : No wants, or fear of wants, shall disturb us. We shall be made *like unto the angels*, and shall *shine as the Sun in the kingdom of our father*. There shall no ill disposition remain in our minds. No soweriness of spirit, no envy nor resentment will then haunt us ; all shall be in an universal harmony, and our happiness shall delight us so much the more, because we shall see all happy about us. Those of low ranks shall not envy those above them, nor shall the higher despise the lower. And as the knowledge of the objects we see is much easier than that we gather from books, discourses or notions ; so then the knowledge shall be an eternal seeing of God, and of those bright truths that will appear as plain to us as light makes ordinary objects now do. This brightness of knowledge will spread over us a perpetual good bent of mind which we shall never lose, but find it still increasing in us : Thus shall we rest from our labours, and enter upon an eternal sabbath. How should those tidings revive us, and make us run on the few steps that remain

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of our race with so much the more alacrity, that we find labour already gone, and a rest already possessing our souls, and that we are as it were on the threshold of our father's house : For the *righteous enter into peace and rest, and lie down on their beds.* Never was a night's rest so refreshing to the weary traveller, as this rest must be to those who have *finish'd their course, having fought a good fight, and kept the faith.*

THE next part of this blessedness is expressed in these words, *and their works do follow them:* Not their bad ones, for all those are forgiven and forgotten as if they had never been. In which every one that finds he has sincerely repented of them, and forsaken all his known sins, and is in a full disposition of mind to forsake all his secret sins, errors, and sins of ignorance, may certainly depend upon the goodness of God, and on the nature of the new covenant, by which repentance and remission of sins, are inseparably connected together in Jesus Christ.

THE works that follow those that die in the Lord, are the good things they have at any time done, or the hard things they have at any time suffer'd : For tho' they in the humility of their souls, are far from valuing themselves upon any thing they have either done or suffer'd ; yet God is not unrighteous to forget their labour of love. He will still set to their account such things as we find in the parable of the last day, *When I was an hungred ye fed me, when thirsty*

thirsty ye gave me drink. Tho' they shall answer, *When saw we thee an hungred, or a thirsty.* Elsewhere we find our Saviour saying, that the giving of a cup of cold water to a disciple upon his account, shall in no wise lose its reward. We may then conclude, that as God is said to put the tears of his people in a bottle, and to count their wanderings in a book, so he marks up all the good they do; and as a father considers the little services his children do him, not so much with regard to the value of these services, or of the advantages he finds from them, as of the affections they express in their little attempts and offers to serve him; so our heavenly father considers more our hearts and affections than the things themselves we have done, or indeed can do; of which he stands in no need, but accepts of them as demonstrations of our love and duty. So all we have done with a sincere mind for his honour, either in private or publick, will be put to our account, and will be separated from its dross. The imperfections will be forgiven, and what was good in us, or our actions, will be valued and rewarded; not according to the thing itself, but to the infinite bounty and goodness of him with whom we have to do.

WHEN we consider what that reward shall be, here must we stand amaz'd to think we may hope to be so unspeakably happy as to see God eternally: To have such a bright impression of his greatness, and glory, as is fitly express'd by
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seeing him, and *seeing him as he is, and knowing him, as we are known.* This must needs fill the soul with the highest pleasure that can flow from the perfectest knowledge of the perfectest object; we shall have such a constant sense of his love to us, as must needs give a joy as far above the joy of being beloved by the best friend, as the sense we shall have of his glory, shall be above our value of all creatures. The vastest value of that, being join'd with the full knowledge of him, the most perfect love to him, and the perpetual sense of his love to us shall give us the highest joy that indeed a rational nature is capable of. Then we shall feel a perpetual and entire quiet in our minds, no guilt, no appetite or passion shall remain in us, but a constant joy in being entirely good; and the sense that this is to be perpetuated to us, shall be still adding a new freshness to that fulness of joy, which would not be entire, unless we also saw it would be endless. All which shall be increased the more, by seeing that happiness diffused among so many blessed spirits, whom we shall so entirely love, that the seeing them happy, shall increase our own blessedness, and their fellowship shall be an addition to it. This being the reward set before us, who would not long for it, and haste to it, and rather grow impatient of these delays that stop us in our way to it? And how should not one rejoice, that has got out of a storm,

Concerning Death. 141

storm, and is not only within sight of that land, but is got just at it, and is ready to step out of a beaten vessel, and a stormy sea, into that rest and blessedness ?

S B R.

S E R M O N IX.

Preached in *Newgate*, before the Lord
RUSSEL, the day before he suffered.

P S A L M XXIV. 4.

Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

WE see here the prospect a great king took of death; he had as many things to make him love life, as the earth could afford. All the wealth and power of a king, and all the glory and prosperity of a conqueror: He had likewise a mixture of other things, to give him many sad apprehensions of it, many very heinous sins, of which, tho' he had sincerely repented, yet he could not
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but feel uneasy thoughts from the remembrance of them, which are ever apt to return upon the mind at the approaches of death; yet with all this we see how he comforts himself, that tho' he were to walk thro' that dark and shaded valley, he would not be afraid.

THERE is somewhat in the nature of man, that makes him apt to be affrighted when he goes in the dark, especially if he passes in the night through gloomy shades; so the mind has a natural aversion and horror at the fears of death. the separating of the soul and body, that twist and joyn so close to one another, the leaving ones friends, and all that is dear to him in life, are things that must go against the grain; for as self-preservation is rooted in our nature, so nature must be struck when it sees a dissolution so inevitably approaching. This, as it does spread a natural thoughtfulness and melancholy over a man's mind; so it commonly brings with it that which must sharpen this melancholy, the remembrance of all past sins, and sad thoughts, with relation to the judgment to come in the future state. Thus we see the terrors of death.

LET us next consider what it was that supported *David*; *I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.* The confidence that a good man may have in God, is that which alone can scatter all his fears; upon which he may well reckon that God will not forsake him in his extremity. The nature of God makes this sure;

a man truly good, that saw another had relied on his promises, and had studied to carry himself so as not to be unworthy of his assistance, could not fail him when he had recourse to him. If then those limited and imperfect degrees of goodness which we find in our selves, set us beyond any thing that is so base, what notions have we of that being that is infinitely perfect, if we think he can forsake those that depend on him, and serve him in singleness of heart, when they are brought to need his assistances most ?

If we further consider the truth of God, we cannot imagine a being infinitely perfect, that has encouraged us to trust in him, can possibly fail us. This is such a degree of treachery and baseness, that as the worst men only can be guilty of it, so we cannot think the perfectest being capable of it. Since then he has promised to us, that he will *never leave us nor forsake us*, we may upon that boldly say, *the Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me*. If to this we add the consideration of God's love to us in his son Christ Jesus, whom he sent into the world, and deliver'd up to such bitter sufferings, that he might be the author of eternal salvation to us ; how can we doubt of the merciful presence of that God with us in our extremities, who has so kindly prevented us while we were yet enemies, with the offers of peace and pardon ? And when we consider what a vast recompense or reward is

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reserved for us in heaven ; we cannot think that he who has entail'd such an inheritance on us, will deny us the supplies of his grace, when we need them most. The greatest engagements that can possibly ly on us to trust a friend, are from past experiences of his steadiness to us ; so if we recapitulate with ourselves, what signal blessings have followed us in the whole course of our lives, how many kind deliverances and preservations we have met with, how often we have been prevented from sinning, and recovered out of it ; how many distinguishing characters of the watchfulness and hoverings of a kind providence over us, we have found on many occasions : Upon all these, one may truly say, *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*

THE outward blessings of life, come within the figure of the *green pastures*, and *still waters*, which are a great part of a shepherd's care of his flock ; and the inward blessings of recovering his soul when he was in an ill way ; and enabling him not only to forsake that course, but to go on in a way of righteousness, belong to the next verse ; *He restoreth my soul, or my life, and leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, even for his own names sake.* And upon such experiences it is a very just inference that may be made for a man's comfort in his extremity, that God will certainly be with him.

THE last and most infallible ground upon which we may conclude that God is with us, is because we find that we adhere firmly to him,
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by an humble dependance on him; and upon that we may well collect that this is an effect of his grace and spirit; and while that spirit works in us, we are thereby assured that *God is with us*. If we find pride, or self-confidence, and an opinion of our own strength or merit rising up in us, we have then just reason to apprehend, that we shall be left to that; but while we feel an humble distrust of ourselves, and a reliance upon God, and that we consider ourselves as nothing, and have no design to raise ourselves, but only to honour God, we may from thence certainly infer, that God is in us, and *will be with us*.

THIS presence of God appears in these two things; the first is in keeping our thoughts fixed on him, so that a man finds in himself an humble confidence, and affectionate reliance upon God. This is not an airy opinion taken up upon slight grounds, that God will be merciful to him, but it arises out of a just and deep sense of the divine holiness and goodness, by which a generous and masculine confidence in him is established in the mind. For we act according to those impressions that are made upon us, and if we have but a faint impression of God, there will rise out of that only a faint reliance, while a more vigorous and steady dependance on him, shews the impressions of him go deep in us. A man cannot call up these in himself, for a raisedness of mind is no more in a man's own power, than health, or freedom from pain are. A man may

put on the outward appearance of it, and act a part, but he cannot create to himself an inward serenity, founded on a confidence on God; so this is one effect of God's being with us.

ANOTHER is not so constant, yet is frequently felt; sometimes good souls, especially near death, feel happy moments, a springing of heart, a tenderness of soul, a flame in the affections, and a quickness in all they think. This may indeed deceive one, and be only the effect of nature and temper, for it depends much on the constitution of the body, and the present state of ones health. Ill men may have it from a heat of blood, and a flush of spirits, and good men that are more steady and composed, may be without it. So the having this alone, ought not to give one quiet, nor the being without it create disquiet. But if a man is otherwise in a good state, and finds such blessed openings towards a brighter light, and a more exalted joy within him, he may justly conclude, that these things are particular favours from God, sent to support him in his greatest extremities. When a man feels himself thus assisted with the divine presence, what is it he can fear? He is above the *strife of tongues*, and the *pride of man*; all that the world can do to him, is to hasten him a little the sooner to his rest, and give him a much quicker passage than he could otherwise find. The reflections on past sins, and the apprehensions of the judgments of God cannot bear down that, when one feels in himself such earnest of God's forgive-

forgiveness and mercy; the approaches of death come upon him that is thus established, rather like the morning of a wedding-day.

THERE is somewhat within a good soul, that gives him a secret taste of the goodness of God, and makes him cry out, *Who is he that can separate us from the love of God in Christ? Shall tribulation, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or the sword, in all these we are more than conquerors; neither death, nor life, things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from that love.* A good man feels this fearless condition so settled in him, and so unshaken, that he knows he owes it to nothing but a secret and unseen presence of God, and says with *David*, *Because he is at my right-hand, I shall never be moved.* If a sudden oppression of spirits should come upon him, yet that does not make him cast off his confidence in God, or expose him to the temptation of doing any thing how false or wicked soever, for his own preservation; he is in such a case to consider, that oppression of spirits as a natural thing, a sort of disease, or at most a trial of his faith and patience, whether he can depend on God, when there is a withdrawing of those brighter thoughts; but he is not to conclude upon that withdrawing, that God is forsaking him: on the contrary, if he finds he continues still in his faith and patience, even when more sprightly thoughts fail him, he is to consider himself as really in a more perfect state, than if these abounded with him.

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The last part of this is, *Thy rod and thy staff comfort me.* By *rod* and *staff* (figures borrowed from a shepherd, that with the one directs, and with the other reduces and corrects his straying sheep) we are to understand the conduct of God's spirit, and the sharpness of his corrections, which do really minister comfort to those that are guided and exercised by them. As to God's *rod*, or conduct, one is to consider it, first with relation to his outward providences; when one traces out the steps of that Providence, and finds somewhat extraordinary and unlook'd for in some signal parts of his life, he may then comfort himself, when he observes that by a train of things which he could not foresee, such events have been brought upon him; and therefore he ought to conclude there is somewhat in this that is of God, in which that supreme, wise Being has secret ends that must be both wise, and good: since he himself is so to perfection. Upon this a good man comforts himself, when he finds that God uses him as a property of his own: and without any complaining, he leaves himself in his hands. By this conduct one is likewise to understand the secret motions and leadings of the divine Spirit: if one finds a happy temper within himself, a real hatred of sin, and yet without despondency; a lively sense of the goodness of God, and yet without presumption, a willingness to live, and yet a contentedness in death; an affectionate sense of one's relations, and yet a readiness to leave them; and if he finds in him-
self

self an erected and well-built contempt of death, not in the swellings of a hero, or the affectations of a vain man, but in the well-grounded expectation of a greater glory to follow it; upon these things a man may conclude he is under the divine conduct; and so while that rod points out his way to him, he is carried to say, *Thou wilt shew me the path of life, in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right-hand there are pleasures for evermore; thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.* No wonder if the comfort of this makes one cry out, *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire besides thee; my heart and my strength faileth me, but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

By *staff*, is to be understood the divine correction by which he punishes and reduces us. When one considers how he had formerly gone astray, how near he has been to be quite lost, and how he has been as a *brand pluckt out of the fire*; how ought he to rejoice, when he finds God deals with him, as a *Father who chasteneth the children that he loves*? When one considers those temptations and snares which would have very probably been in his way, and in what danger he might have been otherwise, being carried into much sin, he ought to adore the judgments of God, tho' they may appear to him as a great depth, and to acquiesce in so small a punishment, as a short restraint, a too early and violent

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violent death, and the being severely talked of for a while.

UPON this, one is again and again to call his sins to his remembrance ; particularly such as relate to his present condition ; that he may sincerely repent of them, and turn both from them, and from all his other sins, to God ; and if he finds, that instead of fretting either at the providence of God, or the instruments he has made use of, he not only submits to it, as it were by force, because he cannot help it, like the submission to a tyrant, but grows to a further pitch, to be really well-pleased with all that God has done, and chearfully to acquiesce in it ; then that *staff* that *corrects*, does also *comfort*. Good men rejoice and glory in their sufferings, considering them as directed by a wise Providence, for good ends. And what should be more pleasant to us, than to find that our heavenly Father, who *does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*, has taken us under his own discipline, and will not suffer us to run headlong, but has put a stop to that which might have been yet much more fatal ; -tho' in a way that may seem fatal to ordinary observers ?

UPON the whole matter then, there is nothing more happy, or more safe, than to cast ourselves wholly upon that sovereign Providence, submitting to him in all that we do see, and adoring that which we cannot comprehend ; following him whithersoever he leads us ; and tho' it were to walk both on to that shaded valley,
and

Concerning Death. 153

and likewise to go through it when he calls us, reckoning that we are not our own, but his, that has bought us with a price, and who will bring us to that inheritance, which he has purchased for us. To him be glory, and honour for ever.
Amen.

S E R.

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S E R M O N X.

Concerning Death.

ECCLES. XII. 7.

*Then shall the dust return to the earth,
as it was, and the spirit shall return
unto God who gave it.*

DEATH has been of late walking round us, and making breach upon breach upon us; and has now carried away the head of this body with a stroak; so that he whom you saw a week ago distributing the holy mysteries, is now laid in the dust; but he still lives; in the many excellent directions he has left us, both how to live, and how to die. It is therefore no unseasonable thing to entertain you a little with that which is the *end of all the living*, happy we, if we *lay it to heart*.

W₂

WE have death set out in the preceding verses, with much pomp, in many lofty figures ; and that in all its approaches, in all the steps it makes towards us, and in the wafts it makes on all the parts of us ; much of the anatomy of a man is brought into the description. The conclusion is, soul and body must part, how closely soever they are now linked, and they are to go very different ways ; the body returns to the dust, and goes downwards, but the soul goes upwards, to appear before him who gave it.

IT is not necessary to prove that you must all die ; we need not call in aid from reason and religion for this ; we feel in ourselves daily decays, and what wafts time and accidents make upon us : the seeds of death are within us, and tho' food and rest recruit us against it, yet both these, and the desire of them may fail us, and then we cannot hold out long : we die daily, our life is but a reprieve from death, and that only during pleasure. We see death walking in the midst of us, we see its visage in the looks of many, as the liveries of it are worn by those who mourn for their dead friends, whom they must quickly follow ; every day we hear the tidings of death, and there are few such assemblies as these, to some of whom they do not prove to be their last. It is not necessary to enlarge on this, which makes up so great a part of our daily discourse, and comes in our way so often, that its very frequency seems to accustom us so to it, as to harden us against the impressions that it might otherwise
make

make upon us. That our bodies are but dust, how curiously soever fashioned and coloured, needs little proof, we are fed either at first remove by that which springs immediately from the dust, or by those creatures which feed on the growth of the earth, and we crumble so soon into dust, that we see what our original is, and in what we must end. Our bodies are indeed curiously formed to serve the ends of life, but they are still dust; as the finest and best painted china is still but clay. This dust of ours must be kept clean, and there are many drains in us for that end: a stoppage in any of these, even in our very pores, and in the smallest of them, will make us soon feel the effects of that obstruction; a very small matter in some of those channels, will raise in us such pains, as will soon imbitter life itself, and make us long to be dust again.

DEATH makes its way to us by many avenues, and in various forms; sometimes it comes on us as a thief in the night, and we are gone without any warning, either to ourselves or others: at other times it comes as an armed man, neither the attendance of friends, the skill of the physician, nor the power of medicines are able to resist it. There are many accidents which open its way to us, that can be as little foreseen as resisted. If at other times death comes at us by slower steps, and in form, and seizes at first some part of us, this is more solemn and instructive both to the person himself, and to all about him, he dies by degrees, and feels him-

self die. A natural reluctancy to this will remain even in good minds, for the Author of our being has planted the love of life in us, for wise and good ends; and it must be a great degree of a new nature, and of a new life begun in us, that will quite master this.

THE very pomp of death makes it more dreadful, the ghastly looks of the dying person, the melancholy silence of the physician, and the sorrowful dejection in all round about him, raise the horror that it gives. The last agonies, the fixed eyes, and the dismal rattle, both tell all those about the dying-bed, that he who is in that plight, is now going to his home, and warn them what they must look for, even if they should live out their whole period, and die the most desired of all deaths, in their beds, and among their friends.

IT is of the greatest importance for us to consider this seriously. Then the world, and every thing in it, will be nothing to us, our houses will then know us no more, our passions and projects come then to an end, and all our thoughts perish; love, hatred and envy do then cease: there is no work, device, knowledge nor wisdom in the grave; they who die, are perhaps remembred by a few till the funeral is over, or a few days after by their friends, but then they are forgotten, soonest perhaps by those who should remember them the longest, and their evil will perhaps be remembred longer than the good they have done, for malice is stronger than gratitude

gratitude. Men call their houses by their own names, and do all they can to secure them to their families; tho' it soon appears that this *their way is their folly, yet their posterity approve their sayings*, and follow their maxims. Death then being a total end to us, and to all our concerns in this world, we ought to look forward, and beyond the grave, to the state and place to which the spirit is to go, even to God who gave it.

THERE is nothing that seems more evident to us, than that dust is neither capable of thought, nor of liberty, and yet we perceive we have both. Our thoughts direct us to discern good and evil, and our liberty in choosing, makes us liable to shame and contempt, or to praise and honour. We feel in us earnestness of future rewards and punishments in the lively joy and true satisfaction we feel when we do well, and in the remorse and confusion that ill actions bring after them; these are both witnesses within us, and abodings of what is before us. We plainly perceive our souls are permanent beings, and that we are the same that we were many years ago; tho' we are sure our bodies are in a perpetual flood, new matter coming on, instead of the old that goes off, and yet one single Being continues in us, our whole life long. We feel this being is capable of a great progress, and tho' the advancement we make from childhood, to a man's state, is the most perceptible, yet we perceive the soul is capable of going on still further

and further, till it is checkt by the body, which first stops, and then sinks under its decays. From all these indications, and from the livelier perceptions that arise gently as we feel death come nearer us, it is reasonable to believe, that as we feel we are accountable creatures to ourselves, to our own reasons and consciences, so much more that we are accountable to him who made us of such a nature, as to choose and act freely.

It is also plain, that the administration of this world is so dark, and so seldom suitable to what might be expected from a good and holy God, and a wise and just judge, that therefore there must be another state before us, in which we are to answer for what we have done in this, and to receive according to it.

It was very reasonable to believe this, before we had any express revelations concerning it, both from the impressions that we have of God, and of ourselves; but we are now fully assured of it, by what the Son of God has declared to us in his gospel, in which he has *brought life and immortality to light*, that were before in the dark, under a more doubtful evidence; whereas now, if we believe the doctrine revealed by our Saviour, we are sure that as there is a great day appointed, in which *God will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath raised from the dead*, before whom all must appear, every one to his own judgment after his death, to give an account of all that he has done in the
body,

2 Tim. 2. 10. Acts 17. 31.

body, and to receive according to it, *whether it be good or bad*; all which particular judgments will be solemnly declared when the consummation of all things shall come. Then the dust that is mouldered into the common heap shall be purified and refined, and put in a fix'd indissoluble and incorruptible state, to be a suitable habitation to a being that is immortal in its nature. *Those that sleep in the dust, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt.*

THESE are to us the most important of all truths. And since this life lasts to an end, and is subject to so many accidents, it is of no great concern to us, otherwise than as it is a scene in which the Providence of God has placed us, to act the part in it that he has assigned us; our bodies are to be taken care of by us, to furnish our minds with proper means and instruments to answer the ends of our being here; but we ought not to set our hearts on any thing that relates to so frail and perishing a substance. An indecent waste of thought, time, and expence, in dressing, adorning and beautifying this dust, is certainly a very unbecoming employment, especially when the mind is neglected, and left as it were to ly in dust, and be covered all over with dust and corruption. An undue gratifying of sense and appetite, as it overcharges the body, and makes it often sink before its time, oppressing it with surfeiting loads, so it reverses the design of nature,

ture, which demands a well-tempered body to answer the uses the soul may put it to.

IF in the midst of all our projects, passions and pleasures, we could accustom ourselves to turn short upon them, with this thought, *we must die*, and we know not how, or when, this alone would cool our heat, and stop our career.

Joseph of Arimathea had a *sepulchre in his garden*, the place both of pleasure and of retirement.

If in the midst of all our joys or diversions, we could remember the days of darkness, this would moderate our excesses, and cut off all extravagancies ; it would bring us oft to a stand, and make us lose the relish that we may be too apt to find in gait and frolick ; it would make even innocent pleasures less enticing, and unlawful ones more hateful. For this end, we should not avoid the sight of death, under the notion that so dreadful a spectacle may bring us under fits of the spleen, or melancholy ; it is better to go into the *into the house of mourning, than into the house of feasting* ; for by the *sorrow of the countenance*, that solemnity of look, and thought, which the sight will raise in us, *the heart will be made better*, it will compose and awaken, recollect and raise our thoughts ; and if the reflections that must arise from such objects, are bitter and unwelcome to us, it is because we feel we are in no good state, or due preparation for our own change, if our turn were to go next ; and it is very reasonable that we should vex and afflict

John 19. 41. Eccles. 7. 2, 3.

afflict our souls, 'till we bring ourselves to the condition of not being surpris'd, if we heard or perceiv'd that *this night our soul was to be taken from us.*

A SICKNESS how strong soever raised by a medicine, in order to carry off an obstructed load, is easily submitted to, and patiently born, it is but short, and it ends in health ; such is the uneasiness that the full views and frequent thoughts of death will give us.

CERTAINLY since there is *no discharge in that warfare*, nor any power to *retain the spirit*, when summon'd to appear before him who sent it ; there is nothing more reasonable, and more necessary, than that we should often meditate upon it, and keep it ever in view, 'till we are so accusom'd to the meditations of death, that we are daily looking for it, and then it can never come upon us at unawares.

BUT we must carry the matter further, the thought of dying, may cool appetite and passion, it may blunt the edge of desire, and flag projects, chiefly those laid at a great distance ; it may bring us to a state of disengagement from the world, and make us more indifferent to all things without us ; but this will only bring us to a cold and lethargick state, unless these thoughts are carried farther, to make us consider the appearance that we must make before God. Certainly if to die, were only to lay down the body as a worn garment, or an untenantable house, it were no
great

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great matter, it were but to fall into a lasting sleep, and a cessation of thought; but if we must appear before him that sent us into the world with such a measure of talents, capacities, and advantages, of all which we must give an account to him, who sees all we do, and knows all we think; then the meditation of death must take in a greater compass; we must be often asking ourselves: For what do we live, and for what is our life furnished with so many blessings? What obligations are we under, and what occasions come in our way to answer these? We must try how we can charge the account that we must make, home upon ourselves, and see how we can answer it, when our own *consciences* do accuse and condemn us; remembering that God is greater than they, and knows all things. He who has a great and long account to give to an exact and severe accountant, is daily stating and ballancing the matter with himself, that so he may find out his errors, and see how he may either excuse or correct them.

THIS is the sure and solid preparation for death and judgment, to examine all our ways, to see how we can answer for them to God, to be observing our errors, and to be humbling ourselves for them, and endeavouring daily to correct them more and more; to be trembling as long as we are in such a state, that the thoughts or nearness of death make us tremble, and never to be at rest, 'till we find we are brought into such a state, that we can think of giving our
account

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account with joy. When we arrive at a just assurance that our sins are forgiven us, because we know we abhor and forsake them, and fly to him who *tasted of death once for us all*, and who now lives, and has assured us that *because he lives, we shall live also*; and who is to be our Judge, as he is now both our Advocate, and our Propitiation; when we feel ourselves dead to the world, and that the world has lost its charms and power over us, and *that a new life hid with Christ in God*, does actuate and animate us; then we may begin to sing, *O Death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* The sting of death is sin; when we find that taken out of us, we know it is also forgiven. Christ carried away that sting, and by his resurrection overcame death, and the grave, and thro' him we shall also overcome, and be *more than conquerors*; we shall not only overcome death, but enter into life, and a state of endless and unspeakable happiness.

WE see what are the two natures, if I may so speak, of which we are composed, soul and body. We do plainly see how mean the original of the body is, and to what it must return; we see the liveliest and amiablest body, as soon as it is forsaken by the spirit, grows loathsome and intolerable even to those who were the most delighted with it formerly; it soon dissolves into corruption, and that is in a few years dead and dry dust. But we have another view of things, when we consider the spirit, it has its original immediately

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immediately from God, it is a breath from that fountain of life, it is of a divine nature, has a spring of thought and motion within itself, which it communicates to the body in which it dwells. It is not bounded by sense, nor tied to this earth, but it rises up towards heaven, and ranges thro' the whole creation of God; it can measure the heavens, and those glorious bodies that rowl in them. It is capable of a flight to abstracted and unbodied natures, it is capable of subduing this whole earth, and every thing in it; it can invent instruments for the curious management and improvement of the more useful parts of the creation, and for conquering and destroying the more intractable parts of it. It can go thro' the seas safe and quick as on dry land, and make the riches of all nations meet together, and so make them to be serviceable to one another. It lays up all that is past in a sure repository, by memory, 'till the mouldring of this dust defaces the impression. It has a heat of imagination, in which it paints and dresses its thoughts, and it can work at a great distance, piercing into the time to come, by prudence, experience, and foresight; it can communicate with the other beings of its kind by speech, and hold a sort of commerce at the greatest distance of place and time by writing. But how shining and glorious soever these performances may seem, it can yet rise much higher in the thoughts of its great Author, in whom *it lives, moves, and has its being*. It can look into its own nature, and see
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its defects, and corruptions, its weaknesſes and follies, it can riſe up to contemplate and imitate the perfections of the ſupream Being. It can ſee into the ſource of all its errors, and obſerve their tendencies, and what they muſt end in; it can ſee how to rectify and correct theſe, and how to work itſelf up to a conformity with the divine Nature, in truth, and juſtice, in purity, and holineſs, in goodneſs, and univerſal love. It can adore and love, meditate on and converſe with that ſource of life, and receive inward communications of a new and better life from him, which are to ſuch both the ſeeds and the earneſts of immortality.

THIS is that ſpirit that came from God, and theſe are the powers and capacities with which he has furniſhed it. Here then is the only excellent part of our being, upon which we ought truly to value ourſelves; by this we grow like God, and fit to appear before him faultleſs, and with exceeding joy.

BUT as this ſpirit is thus capable of riſing up to this ſublimity, ſo it is capable of ſinking into as great an abyſs of corruption and miſery. If it turns its thoughts away from conſidering of God, and from juſt reflections on itſelf, and applies them wholly to the body, and the concerns of this duſt, if it is wholly or chiefly taken up with hunting after ſuch gains or pleaſures as terminate in this body, and in this preſent life; and in order to theſe, lets go a ſenſe of truth and juſtice, and takes into the methods of
deceit

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deceit and falshood ; if it is so forsaken of true goodness, that it is corrupted with envy, and blackned with malice ; if, instead of purity, and holiness, it gives itself to appetite and sensuality ; if it is swel'd up with pride, and is surfeited with luxury, then this spirit has so far fallen from that being that it sprang from, and is become so very unlike to it, that it is very unfit to appear before that God, from whom it has so deeply revolted, and to whom it has made such unworthy returns, so disproportioned to its own nature, and so unsuitable to what it had received ; it must be under all the confusion of shame, and all the horror of remorse, when it feels itself dragg'd out of the body, and hurry'd to the tribunal of a just and dreadful judge. It sometimes feels such an aboding of what it must look for, that it can neither live nor die, but is in most violent agonies ; hills and mountains would be then a light burden, if they could cover ill men from the anger of that Saviour of the world, who is now full of mercy and compassion, but will then look at him in his anger, and vex them in his sore displeasure. . What can a soul that has so corrupted itself look for, but to be *cast out for ever from the presence of the Lord, and be punished with an everlasting destruction ?*

THESE are not the vapours of the spleen, nor the dreams of melancholy ; they are the natural consequences, as well as they are the just punish-

punishments of that depravation, into which such persons have run themselves, and from which, neither the terrors nor the mercies of God, could rescue them; they disbelieved and despised both, and so they must be for ever cut off from the one, and adjudged to the other.

OH! that we were wise, and could consider our latter end, and the just and certain consequences that must follow on the state in which death shall find us. But if this prospect is black and dreadful; on the other hand, how bright and glorious is the reverse of it? With what joy and assurance may a spirit return to him who gave it, that has in some measure acted suitably to the light and blessings it has enjoyed, and that has risen up to high degrees of purity, and to a true sublimity and excellence of nature, and is become in some sort conformable to Christ, and *perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect*? These have begun to feel within themselves some measure of that blessedness which they go to enjoy; and from those first-fruits are able to judge what that fulness of joy must be.

THEY feel already the joy of loving all good souls, and of being beloved of them; so they do readily apprehend the blessedness of that state, where universal, pure, and perfect love does for ever reign. They feel the joy of loving God, and of being assured of his love; so they can well think how happy the state is of knowing and loving him perfectly, and of feeling

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ing themselves eternally under the clear and lively impressions of God's love to them, which will ever shine upon them warm and strong, giving them all the extasies of joy, and all the transports of love that are possible.

THEY feel the joy of a good conscience, and the inward relish of truth and purity very sensibly, tho' they are often clouded by the sins and errors they fall into, which give 'em many uneasy hours, and many sad thoughts; these must feel a true and solid joy in the prospect of the perfect purity of that happy state. Those who are deeply affected with the temptations, to which they are daily exposed, with the weight of a dull body, and its many cravings and necessities, with the distractions of their affairs and concerns, and the entanglements from bad customs, and ill company, must rejoyce when they see an entrance in a true light, by a deliverance from all temptations, and the being clothed with a body from heaven, that shall have neither wants, nor decays, but that shall shine *as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*

THESE thoughts raised with a lively faith, and kept ever warm in our minds, will overcome our aversions even to death, and make us meet it with joy, *looking for it, and hasting to it*; such souls feel already so much, that they must needs long, but with humble and patient submission, for an intire deliverance from what they groan under, and for the perfect enjoyment

Matth. 13. 43. 2 Pet. 3. 12.

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ment of that they know is abiding them ; and when our friends get thither before us, instead of *sorrowing as those who have no hope*, we ought to look after them with joy, and be pressing still forward, that at last we may deliver up our spirits to him, from whom they came, as *into the hands of a faithful Creator*, knowing who is at his right-hand, who will present us to his Father, having washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests for ever unto God. To him be glory for ever, *Amen.*

1 Thess. 4. 13. 1 Pet. 4. 19.

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S E R M O N X I.

PREACHED AT THE
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OF THE HONOURABLE
R O B E R T B O Y L E;
JANUARY 7. 169 $\frac{1}{2}$.

E C C L E S. II. 26.

*For God giveth to a man that is good
in his sight, wisdom, knowledge, and
joy.*

WHEN the author of this book, the
wisest of men, *applied his heart to know
and to search, to seek out wisdom, and
the reason (or nature) of things;* and summed
up the account of all, article by article, *one by
one,* to find out the thread of nature, and the
plan

P 3

Ecc. 7. 25, 27.

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plan of its great Author ; *tho' his soul sought after it*, yet the riddle was too dark, he, even he, could not discover it : *But one man among a thousand he did find*, and happy was he in that discovery, if among all the thousands that he knew, he found one counting figure for so many cyphers, which tho' they increased the number, yet did not swell up the account, but were so many nothings, or less and worse than nothings, according to his estimate of men and things.

WE have reason rather to think, that by a *thousand* is to be meant a vast and indefinite number ; otherwise it must be confessed that *Solomon's* age was indeed a golden one, if it produced *one man, to a thousand* that carry only the name and figure, but that do not answer the end and excellency of their being. The different degrees and ranks of men, with relation to their inward powers and excellencies, is a surprizing but melancholy observation : many seem to have only a mechanical life, as if there were a moving and speaking spring within them, equally void both of reason and goodness. The whole race of men is for so many years of life, little better than encreasing puppets ; many are children to their lives end : the soul does for a large portion of life, sink wholly into the body in that shadow of death, sleep, that consumes so much of our time ; the several disorders of the body, the blood and the spirits, do so far subdue and master the mind, as to make it think, act, and speak according to the different ferment

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ments that are in the humours of the body ; and when these cease to play, the soul is able to hold its tenure no longer : All these are strange and amazing speculations ! and force one to cry out, Why did such a perfect being make such feeble and imperfect creatures ? *Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain ?* The secret is yet more astonishing, when the frowardness, the pride and ill-nature, the ignorance, folly and fury that hang upon their poor, flattered creature, are likewise brought into the account. He that by all his observation, and *encrease of knowledge*, only *encreaseth sorrow*, while he sees that *what is wanting cannot be numbred*, and that *which is crooked cannot be made straight*, is tempted to go about, and with *Solomon*, to make his heart to despair of all the labour wherein the labour he has travelled.

BUT as there is a dark side of human nature, so there is likewise a bright one. The flights and compass of awakned souls is no less amazing. The vast croud of figures that lie in a very narrow corner of the brain, which a good memory, and a lively imagination, can fetch out in great order, and with much beauty : the strange reaches of the mind in abstracted speculations, and the amazing progress that is made from some simple truths into theories, that are the admiration as well as entertainment of the thinking part of mankind ; the sagacity of apprehending and judging, even at the greatest distance ; the elevation that is given to sense, and the sensible powers,

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powers, by the invention of instruments; and which is above all, the strength that a few thoughts do spread into the mind, by which it is made capable of doing or suffering the hardest things; the life which they give, and the calm which they bring, are all so unaccountable, that take all together, a man is a strange huddle, of light and darkness, of good and evil, and of wisdom and folly. The same man, not to mention the difference that the several ages of life make upon him, feels himself in some minutes so different from what he is in the other parts of his life, that as the one fly away with him into the transports of joy; so the other do no less sink him into the depressions of sorrow: he scarce knows himself in the one, by what he was in the other: upon all which, when one considers a man both within and without, he concludes that he is both *wonderfully*, and also *fearfully made*: That in one side of him he is but a little lower than angels, and in another, a little, a very little higher than beasts.

BUT how astonishing soever this speculation of the medly and contrariety in our composition may be, it contributes to raise our esteem the higher, of such persons as seem to have arisen above, (if not all, yet) all the eminent frailties of human nature; that have used their bodies only as engines and instruments to their minds, without any other care about them, but to keep them in good case, fit for the uses they put them to; that have brought their souls to a purity which

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which can scarce appear credible to those who do not imagine that to be possible to another, which is so far out of their own reach ; and whose lives have shined in a course of many years, with no more allay nor mixture, than what just served to shew that they were of the same human nature with others ; who have lived in a constant contempt of wealth, pleasure, or the greatness of this world ; whose minds have been in as constant a pursuit of knowledge, in all the several ways in which they could trace it ; who have added new regions of their own discoveries, and that in a vast variety to all that they had found made before them ; who have directed all their enquiries into nature to the honour of its great Maker : and have joined two things, that how much soever they may seem related, yet have been found so seldom together, that the world has been tempted to think them inconsistent ; a constant looking into nature, and a yet more constant study of religion, and a directing and improving of the one by the other ; and who to a depth of knowledge which often makes men morose, and to a height of piety, which too often makes them severe, have added all the softness of humanity, and all the tenderness of charity, an obliging civility, as well as a melting kindness : when all these do meet in the same person, and that in eminent degrees, we may justly pretend that we have also made *Solomon's* observation of *one man* ; but alas ! the age is not so fruitful of such, that we can add, *one among a thousand.*

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To such a man the characters given in the words of my text, do truly agree, That *God giveth to him that is good in his sight, wisdom, knowledge, and joy* : The text that is here before us, does so agree to this that I have read, that the application will be so easie, that it will be almost needless, after I have a little opened it.

A man that is good in the sight of God, is a character of great extent : goodness is the probity and purity of the mind, shewing itself in a course of sedate tranquillity, of a contented state of life, and of virtuous and generous actions. A good man is one that considers what are the best principles of his nature, and the highest powers of his soul ; and what are the greatest and the best things that they are capable of ; and that likewise observes what are the disorders and depressions, the inward diseases and miseries, which tend really to lessen and to corrupt him ; and that therefore intends to be the purest, the wisest, and the noblest creature that his nature can carry him to be, that renders himself as clean and innocent, as free from designs and passions, as much above appetite and pleasure, and all that sinks the soul deeper into the body ; that is as tender and compassionate, as gentle and good natured as he can possibly make himself to be. This is the good man in my text ; that rises as much as he can above his body, and above this world, above his senses, and the impressions that sensible objects make upon him ; that thinks the greatest and best thing he can do, is to awaken and improve

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prove the seeds and capacities to virtue and knowledge, that are in his nature ; to raise those to the noblest objects, to put them in the rightest method, and to keep them ever in tune and temper: and that with relation to the rest of mankind, considers himself as a citizen of the whole world, and as a piece of human nature ; that enters into the concerns of as many persons as come within his sphere, without the narrowness or partiality of meaner regards ; that thinks he ought to extend his care and kindness as far as his capacity can go ; that stretches the instances of this, to the utmost corners of the earth, if occasion is given for it ; and that intends to make mankind the better, the wiser, and the happier for him in the succeeding as well as in the present generation.

THIS is the truly good man in God's fight, who does not act a part, or put on a mask ; who is not for some time in a constraint, till the design is compact, for which he put himself under that force ; but is truly and uniformly good, and is really a better man in secret, than even he appears to be ; since all his designs and projects are worthy and great : and *nature, accidents and surprises* may be sometimes too quick and too hard for him ; yet these cannot reach his heart, nor change the settled measures of his life ; which are all pure and noble. And tho' the errors of this good man's conduct may in some things give advantages to bad men, who are always severe censurers ; yet his unspeakable comfort is,
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that he can make his secret appeals to God, who knows the whole of his heart as well as the whole of his life; and tho' here and there, things may be found that look not quite so well, and that do indeed appear worst of all to himself, who reflects the oftenest, and thinks the most heinously of them; yet by measuring infinite goodness with his own proportion of it, and by finding that he can very gently pass over many and great defects in one whose principles and designs seem to be all pure and good, he from that concludes, That those allowances must be yet infinitely greater, where the goodness is infinite; so being assured within himself, that his vitals, his inward principles, and the scheme and course of his life are good, he from thence raises an humble confidence in himself, which tho' it does not, as indeed it ought not, free him from having still low thoughts of himself, yet it delivers him from all dispiriting fear and sorrow, and gives him a firm confidence in the love and goodness of God, out of which he will often feel an incredible source of satisfaction and joy, springing up in his mind. A man who is thus good in the sight of God, has, as one may truly think, happiness enough within himself. But this is not all his reward, nor is it all turned over into a reversion. We have here a fair particular given us, by one that dealt as much both in wisdom and folly, as ever man did; who run the whole compass of pleasure, business and learning, with the freest range, and in the greatest

greatest variety, and who by many repeated experiments knew the strong and the weak sides of things: he then who had found the vanity, the labour, the sore travel, and the vexation of spirit that was in all other things; the many disappointments that were given by them, and the painful reflections that did arise out of them so sensibly, *that they made him hate life for the sake of all the labour that belonged to it, and even to make his heart despair of all the travel he had undergone*, gives us in these words another view of the effect of true goodness, and of the happy consequences that follow it.

THE first of these is *wisdom*, not the art of craft and dissimulation; the cunning of deceiving or undermining others: not only the views that some men may have of the springs of human nature, and the art of turning these; which is indeed a nobler scene of wisdom, by which societies are conducted and maintain'd. But the chief acts and instances of true wisdom, are once to form right judgments of all things; of their value, and of their solidity; to form great and noble thoughts of God, and just and proper ones of ourselves; to know what we are capable of, and fit for; to know what is the true good and happiness of mankind, which makes societies safe, and nations flourish. This is solid wisdom, that is not misled by false appearances, nor imposed on by vulgar opinions. This was the wisdom that first brought men together, that tamed and corrected their natures; and established all the art

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and good government that was once in the world ; but which has been almost totally defaced by the arts of *robbery* and *murder*, the true names for *conquest* ; a specious colour for the two worst things that human nature is capable of, *Injustice* and *Cruelty*.

WISDOM in gross, is the forming true principles, the laying good schemes, the employing proper instruments, and the chusing fit seasons for doing the best and noblest things that can arise out of human nature. This is the *defence* as well as the *glory* of mankind : *Wisdom gives life to him that hath it, it is better than strength, and better than weapons of war* ; it is, in one word, the image of God, and the excellency of man. It is here called, *the gift of God* ; the seed of it is laid in our nature, but there must be a proper disposition of body, a right figure of brain, and a due temper of blood to give it scope and materials. These must also be cultivated by an exact education ; so that when all these things are laid together, it is plain in how many respects wisdom comes from God. There are also particular happy flights, and bright minutes, which open to men great land skips, and give them a fuller prospect of things, which do often arise out of no previous meditations, or chain of thought, and these are flashes of light from its eternal source, which do often break in upon pure minds. They are not enthusiasms, nor extravagant pretensions, but true views of things which appear so plain and simple, that
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when they come to to be examined, it may be justly thought that any one could have fallen upon them, and the simplest are always the likest to be the truest. In short, a pure mind is both better prepared for an enlightning from above; and more capable of receiving it; the natural strength of mind is awakned as well as recollected; false biasses are remov'd; and let profane minds laugh at it as much as they please, there is a secret commerce between God and the souls of good men; they feel the influences of heaven, and become both the wiser and the better for them: their thoughts become nobler as well as freer; and no man is of so low a composition, but that with a great deal of goodness, and a due measure of application, he may become more capable of these, than any other that is on the same level with him, as to his natural powers, could ever grow to be, if corrupted with vice and defilement.

KNOWLEDGE comes next: this is that which opens the mind, and fills it with great notions; the viewing the works of God even in a general survey, gives insensibly a greatness to the soul. But the more extended and exact, the more minute and severe the enquiry be, the soul grows to be thereby the more enlarged by the variety of observation that is made, either on the great orbs and wheels that have their first motion, as well as their law of moving, from the Author of all; or on the composition of bodies, on the regularities, as well as the irregularities of nature;

and that mimicry of its heat and motion that artificial fires do produce and shew. This knowledge goes into the history of past times, and remote climates; and with those livelier observations on art and nature, which give a pleasant entertainment and amusement to the mind, there are joined in some, the severer studies, the more laborious as well as the less pleasant study of languages, on design to understand the sense, as well as the discoveries of former ages: and more particularly to find out the true sense of the sacred writings. These are all the several varieties of the most useful parts of knowledge; and these do spread over all the powers of the soul of him that is capable of them, a sort of nobleness; that makes him become thereby another kind of creature than otherwise he ever could have been: he has a larger size of soul, and vaster thoughts, that can measure the spheres, and enter into the theories of the heavenly bodies; that can observe the proportion of lines, and numbers, the composition and mixtures of the several sorts of beings. This world, this life, and the mad scene we are in, grow to be but little and inconsiderable things, to one of great views and noble theories; and he who is upon the true scent of real and useful knowledge, has always some great thing or other in prospect; new scenes do open to him, and these draw after them discoveries, which are often made before even those who made them were either aware, or in expectation of them: these by an
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endless chain are still pointing at, or leading into further discoveries. In all those, a man feels as sensibly, and distinguishes as plainly an improvement of the strength and compass of his powers, from the feebleness which ignorance and sloth bring upon them, as a man in health of body can distinguish between the life and strength which accompany it, and the flatness and languidness that diseases bring with them. This enlarges a man's empire over the creation, and makes it more entirely subject to him by the engines it invents to subdue and manage it, by the dissections in which it is more opened to his view, and by the observation of what is profitable or hurtful in every part of it: from which he is led to correct the one, and exalt the other. This leads him into the knowledge of the hidden virtues that are in plants and minerals; this teaches him to purify these from the allays that are wrapped about them, and to improve them by other mixtures. In a word, this lets a man into the mysteries of nature: it gives him both the keys that open it, and a thread that will lead him further than he durst promise himself at first. We can easily apprehend the surprising joy of one born blind, that after many years of darkness, should be blest with sight, and the leaps and life of thought, that such an one should feel upon so ravishing a change; so the new regions into which a true son of knowledge enters, the new objects, and the various shapes of them that do daily present

themselves to him, give his mind a flight, a raisedness, and a refined joy, that is of another nature than all the soft and bewitching pleasures of sense. And tho' the highest reaches of knowledge do more clearly discover the weakness of our short-sighted powers, and shew us difficulties that gave us no pain before, because we did not apprehend them; so that in this respect, he that *increases knowledge, increases sorrow*: yet it is a real pleasure to a searcher after truth, to be undeceived, to see how far he can go, and where he must make his stops: It is true, he finds he cannot compass all that he hath proposed to himself, yet he is both in view of it, and in the way to it, where he finds so many noble entertainments; that tho' he cannot find out the whole work of God, which the *Preacher* tells us, that tho' *a wise man thinks he may know it, yet even he shall not be able to find it out*; yet he has this real satisfaction in himself, that he has greater notions, nobler views, and finer apprehensions than he could have ever fallen upon in any other method of life.

THIS knowledge, tho' it may seem to be merely the effect of thought, of labour, and industry, yet it is really the gift of God. The capacity of our powers, and the disposition of our minds are in a great measure born with us: the circumstances and accidents of our lives depend so immediately upon Providence, that in all these respects, knowledge comes, at least in
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the preparations to it, from God: there are also many happy openings of thought, which arise within the minds of the searchers after it, to which they did not lead themselves by any precious inferences, or by the comparing of things together. That which the language of the world calls *chance, happ, accidents, or good stars*, but is according to a more sanctified dialect *Providence*, has brought many wonderful secrets by unlook'd for hits, to the knowledge of men. The use of the loadstone, and the extent of sight by telescopes, besides a vast variety of other things that might be named, were indeed the immediate gifts of God to those who first fell upon them. And the profoundest inquirers into the greatest mysteries of nature, have and still do own this, in so particular a manner, that they affirm, that things that in some hands, and at some times are successful almost to a prodigy, when managed by others with all possible exactness do fail in the effects of them so totally, that the difference can be resolved into nothing, but a secret direction and blessing of Providence.

THE third gift that God bestows on the good man, is *joy*, and how can it be otherwise, but that a good, a wise and knowing man, should rejoice both in God and in himself; in observing the works and ways of God, and in feeling the testimony of a good conscience with himself. He is happy in the situation of his own mind, which he possesses in a calm contented evenness of spirit. He has not the agitations of passions,
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the ferment of designs and interests, nor the disorders of appetite which darken the mind, and create to it many imaginary troubles, as well as it encreases the sense of the real ones which may ly upon one's person or affairs. He rejoyces in God when he sees so many of the hidden beauties of his works, the wonderful fitness and contrivance, the curious disposition, and the vast usefulness of them, to the general good of the whole. These things afford him so great a variety of thought, that he can dwell long on that noble exercise without flatness or weariness. He rejoyceth in all that he does, his employments are much diversify'd, for the newness of his discoveries which returns often, gives him as often a newness of joy: His views are great, and his designs are noble; even to know the works of God the better, and to render them the more useful to mankind. He can discover in the most despised plant, and the most contemptible mineral that which may allay the miseries of human life, and render multitudes of men easie and happy. Now to one that loves mankind, and that adores the Author of our nature, every thing that may tend to celebrate his praises, and to sweeten the lives of mortals, affords a joy that is of an exalted and generous kind. If this at any time goes so far as to make him a little too well pleased with the discoveries he has made, and perhaps too nicely jealous of the honour of having done those services to the world, even this which is the chief and the most observed defect, that
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is much magnified by the ill-natured censures of great men, who must fix on it because they can find nothing else, yet I say, even this shews the fullness of joy which wisdom and knowledge bring to good minds, they give them so sensible a pleasure, that it cannot be at all times governed: and if it break out in any time in less decent instances, yet certainly those who have deserved so highly of the age in which they have lived, and who have been the instruments of so much good to the world, receive a very unworthy return, if the great services they have done mankind do not cover any little imperfection, especially when that is all the allay that can be found in them, and the only instance of human frailty that has appeared in them. But if the joy that wisdom and knowledge give, is of so pure and so sublime a nature; there is yet another occasion for joy, that far exceeds this: it arises from their integrity and goodness which receives a vast accession from this, that it is *in the sight of God*, seen and observed by him, who accepts of it now, and will in due time reward it. The terror of mind, and the confusion of face that follows bad actions, and the calm of thought and cheerfulness of look that follows good ones, are such infallible indications of the suitableness or unsuitableness that is in these things to our natures, that all the contempt with which Libertines may treat the argument will never be able to overcome and alter the plain and simple sense that mankind agrees in upon this head. A good
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man finds that he is acting according to his nature, and to the best principles in it, that he is living to some good end, that he is an useful piece of the world, and is a mean of making both himself and others wiser and happier, greater and better. These things give him a solid and lasting joy, and when he dares appeal to that God to whom he desires chiefly to approve himself, who knows his integrity and sees how thoroughly good he is, even in his secretest thoughts and intentions, he does upon that feel a joy within himself, that carries him through all the difficulties of life; and makes most accidents that happen to him pleasant, and all the rest supportable. He believes he is in the favour of God, he hopes he has some title to it, from the promises of God to him, and his grace in him. He can see clouds gather about him and threaten a storm, and tho' he may be in circumstances, that render him very unfit to suffer much hardship; yet he can endure and bear all things, because he believes all God's promises. He may sometimes from the severe sense that he has of his duty, be too hard, and even unjust to himself, and the seriousness of his temper may give some harsher thoughts too great occasion, to raise disquiet within him; but when he takes a full view of the infinite goodness of God, of the extent of his mercy, and of the riches of his grace; he is forced to throw out any of those impressions, which melancholy may be able to make upon him: and even those when reflected

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on in a truer light, tho they might have a little interrupted his joy, yet tend to increase it, when by them he perceives, that true strictness of principles that governs him, which makes him tender of every thing that might seem to make the least breach upon his purity and holiness, even in the smallest matters.

I WILL go no further upon my text, nor will I enter upon the reverse of it, that is in the following words, *but to the sinner he giveth travel, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God.* These I leave to your observation: they are too foreign to my subject, to be spoke to, upon this occasion, that leads me now to the melancholy part of this said solemnity.

I CONFESS I enter upon it, with the just apprehensions that it ought to raise in me: I know I ought here to raise my stile a little, and to triumph upon the honour that belongs to religion and virtue; and that appeared so eminently in a life, which may be considered as a pattern of living; and a pattern so perfect, that it will perhaps seem a little too far out of sight, too much above the hopes, and by consequence above the endeavours of any that might pretend to draw after such an original: which must ever be reckoned amongst the master-pieces even of that *Great Hand* that made it. I might here challenge the whole tribe of *Libertines* to come and view the usefulness, as well as the excellence of the Christian religion, in a life that
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was intirely dedicated to it : and see what they can object. I ought to call on all that were so happy, as to know him well, to observe his temper and course of life, and charge them to sum up and lay together the many great and good things that they saw in him, and from thence to remember always to how vast a sublimity the Christian religion can raise a mind, that does both thoroughly believe it, and is entirely governed by it. I might here also call up the multitudes, the vast multitudes of those who have been made both the wiser and the easier, the better and the happier by his means ; but that I might do all this with the more advantage, I ought to bring all at once into my memory, the many happy hours that in a course of nine and twenty years conversation have fallen to my own share, which were very frequent and free for above half that time : that have so often both humbled and raised me, by seeing how exalted he was, and in that feeling more sensibly my own nothing and depression, and which have always edified, and never once, nor in any one thing been uneasy to me. When I remember how much I saw in him, and learned, or at least might have learned from him ; When I reflect on the gravity of his very appearance, the elevation of his thoughts and discourses, the modesty of his temper, and the humility of his whole deportment, which might have served to have forced the best thoughts even upon the worst minds, when, I say, I bring all this together into my mind ; as I form upon it too
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bright an idea to be easily received by such as did not know him; so I am very sensible that I cannot raise it, equal to the thoughts of such as did. I know, the limits that custom gives to discourses of this kind, and the hard censures which commonly follow them: these will not suffer me to say all I think; as I perceive I cannot bring out into distinct thoughts all that of which I have the imperfect hints and ruder draughts in my mind, which cannot think equal to a subject so far above my own level. I shall now therefore shew him only in perspective, and give a general, a very general view of him, reserving to more leisure and better opportunities, a farther and fuller account of him. I will be content at present to say but a little of him; but that little will be so very much, that I must expect that those who do never intend to imitate any part of it, will be displeased with it all. I am resolved to use great reserves; and to manage a tenderness, which how much soever it may melt me, shall not carry me beyond the strictest measures, and I will study to keep as much within bounds, as he lived beyond them.

I WILL say nothing of the *Stem* from which he sprang: that watered garden, watered with the blessings and dew of heaven, as well as fed with the best portions of this life, that has produced so many noble plants, and has stocked the most families in these kingdoms of any in our age. Which has so signally felt the effects of their humble and Christian motto, *God's pro-*

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vidence is my inheritance. He was the only brother of five, that had none of these titles that sound high in the world ; but he procured one to himself, which without derogating from the dignity of kings must be acknowledged to be beyond their prerogative. He had a great and noble fortune ; but it was chiefly so to him, because he had a great and noble mind to employ it to the best uses. He began early to shew both a probity and a capacity, that promised great things : and he passed through the youthful parts of life, with so little of the youth in him, that in his travels while he was very young and wholly the master of himself he seemed to be out of the reach of the disorders of that age, and those countries through which he passed. He had a modesty and a purity laid so deep in his nature, that those who knew him the earliest have often told me, that even then nature seemed entirely sanctified in him. His piety received a vast increase as he often owned to me from his acquaintance with the great Primate of Ireland, the never enough admired *Usher*, who as he was very particularly the friend of the whole family, so seeing such seed and beginnings in him, studied to cultivate them with due care. He set him chiefly to the study of the scriptures in their original languages, which he followed in a course of many years, with so great exactness he could have quoted all remarkable passages very readily in *Hebrew* : and he read the New-testament so diligently in the *Greek*, that there never occurred

curred to me an occasion to mention any one passage of it, that he did not readily repeat in that language. The use of this he continued to the last, for he could read it with other mens eyes; but the weakness of his sight forced him to disuse the other, since he had none about him that could read it to him. He had studied the scriptures to so good purpose, and with so critical a strictness, that few men whose profession oblige them chiefly to that sort of learning have gone beyond him in it: and he had so great a regard to that sacred book, that if any one in discourse had dropped any thing that gave him a clearer view of any passage in it, he received it with great pleasure, he examined it accurately, and if it was not uneasy to him that offered it, he desired to have it in writing. He had the profoundest veneration for the great God of heaven and earth, that I have ever observed in any person. The very name of God was never mentioned by him without a pause and a visible stop in his discourse, in which one that knew him most particularly above twenty years, has told me that he was so exact, that he does not remember to have observed him once to fail in it.

He was most constant and serious in his secret addresses to God; and indeed it appeared to those, who conversed most with him in his enquiries into nature, that his main design in that, on which as he had his own eye most constantly, so he took care to put others often in mind

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of it, was to raise in himself and others vaster thoughts of the greatness and glory, and of the wisdom and goodness of God, This was so deep in his thoughts, that he concludes the article of his will, which relates to that *illustrious* Body, the Royal Society, in these words, *Wishing them also a happy success in their laudable attempts, to discover the true nature of the works of God; and praying that they and all other searchers into physical truths, may cordially refer their attainments to the glory of the great Author of nature, and to the comfort of mankind.* As he was a very devout Worshipper of God, so he was a no less devout Christian. He had possessed himself with such an amiable view of that holy religion, separated from either superstitious practices or the soubornness of partys, that as he was fully perswaded of the truth of it, and indeed wholly possessed with it, so he rejoiced in every discovery that nature furnish'd him with, to illustrate it, or to take off the objections against any part of it. He always considered it as a system of truths, which ought to purify the hearts, and govern the lives of those who profess it; he loved no practice that seemed to lessen that, nor any nicety that occasioned divisions amongst Christians. He thought pure and disinterested Christianity was so bright and so glorious a thing, that he was much troubled at the disputes and divisions which had arisen about some lesser matters, while the great and the most important, as well as the most

most universally acknowledged truths were by all sides almost as generally neglected as they were confessed. He had therefore designed, tho' some accidents did, upon great considerations, divert him from settling it during his life, but not from ordering it by his will, that a liberal provision should be made for one, who should in a very few well digested sermons, every year, set forth the truth of the Christian religion in general, without descending to the subdivisions among Christians, and who should be changed every third year, that so this noble study and employment might pass through many hands, by which means many might become masters of the argument. He was at the charge of the translation and impression of the New-testament into the *Malayan* language, which he sent over all the *East-Indies*. He gave a noble reward to him that translated Grotius his incomparable book of the *Truth of the Christian religion* into *Arabick*, and was at the charge of a whole impression, which he took care to order to be scattered in all the countries where that language is understood. He was resolved to have carried on the impression of the New-testament in the *Turkish* language, but the Company thought it became them to be the doers of it, and so suffered him only to give a large share towards it. He was at 700 *l.* charge in the edition of the *Irish* Bible, which he ordered to be distributed in *Ireland*; and he contributed liberally both to the impressions of the *Welsh* Bible, and of the *Irish*

Bible for *Scotland*. He gave during his life 300 *l.* to advance the design of propogating the Christian religion in *America*, and as soon as he heard the *East-India* Company were entertaining propositions for the like design in the *East*, he presently sent a 100 *l.* for a beginning and an example, but intended to carry it much further, when it should be set on foot to purpose. Thus was his zeal lively and effectual in the greatest and truest concerns of religion; but he avoided to enter far into the unhappy breaches that have so long weakned, as well as distracted Christianity, any otherwise than to have a great averfion to all those opinions and practices, that seemed to him to destroy morality and charity. He had a most particular zeal against all severities and persecutions upon the account of religion. I have seldom observ'd him to speak with more heat and indignation, than when that came in his way. He did thoroughly agree with the doctrines of our church, and conform to our worship; and he approved of the main of our constitution, but he much lamented some abuses that he thought remained still among us. He gave eminent instances of his value for the clergy. Two of these I shall only mention. When he understood what a share he had in impropriations, he ordered very large gifts to be made to the incumbents in those parishes, and to the widows of such as had died before he had resolved on this charity. The sums that, as I have been informed, by one that was concerned in

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two distributioas that were made, amounted upon these two occasions, to near 600 *l.* and another very liberal one is also ordered by his will, but in an indefinite sum, I suppose, by reason of the present condition of estates in *Ireland*: so plentifully did he supply those who served at the altar, out of that which was once devoted to it, tho' it be now converted to a temporal estate. Another instance of his sense of the sacred functions went much deeper. Soon after the Restoration in the year Sixty, the great Minister of that time, pressed him both by himself and by another, who was then likewise in a high post, to enter into orders. He did it not merely out of a respect to him and his family, but chiefly out of his regard to the church, that he thought would receive a great strengthening, as well as a powerful example from one, who, if he once entred into holy orders, would be quickly at the top. This he told me made some impressions on him. His mind was, even then at three-and-thirty, so intirely disingaged from all the projects and concerns of this world, that as the prospect of dignity in the church, could not move him much, so the probabilities of his doing good in it, was much the stronger motive. Two things determined him against it; one was, That his having no other interests, with relation to religion, besides those of saving his own soul, gave him, as he thought, a more unsuspected authority, in writing or acting on that side: he knew the profane crew fortified themselves

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selves against all that was said by men of our profession, with this, That it was their trade, and that they were paid for it: he hoped therefore, that he might have the more influence, the less he shared in the patrimony of the church. But his main reason was, That he had so high a sense of the obligations of the pastoral care; and of such as watch over those souls, which *Christ purchased with his own blood*, and for which they must give an account, at the last and great day, that he durst not undertake it, especially not having felt within himself an *inward motion to it by the Holy Ghost*; and the first question that is put to those who come to be initiated into the service of the church, relating to that motion, he who had not felt it, thought he durst not make the step; lest otherwise he should have lied to the Holy Ghost: so solemnly and seriously did he judge of sacred matters. He was constant to the church; and went to no separate assemblies, how charitable soever he might think of their persons, and how plentifully soever he might have relieved their necessities. He loved no narrow thoughts, nor low or superstitious opinions in religion, and therefore as he did not shut himself up within a party, so neither did he shut any party out from him. He had brought his mind to such a freedom, that he was not apt to be imposed on; and his modesty was such, that he did not dictate to others; but proposed his own sense, with a due and decent distrust; and was ever very ready

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to hearken to what was suggested to him by others. When he differed from any, he expressed himself in so humble and so obliging a way, that he never treated things or persons with neglect, and I never heard that he offended any one person in his whole life by any part of his deportment: for if at any time he saw cause to speak roundly to any, it was never in passion, or with any reproachful or indecent expressions. And as he was careful to give those who conversed with him, no cause or colour for displeasure: so he was yet more careful of those who were absent, never to speak ill of any; in which he was the exactest man I ever knew. If the discourse turned to be hard on any, he was presently silent; and if the subject was too long dwelt on, he would at last interpose, and between reproof and railery, divert it.

He was exactly civil, rather to ceremony; and though he felt his easiness of access, and the desires of many, all strangers in particular, to be much with him, made great waists on his time; yet as he was severe in that, not to be denied when he was at home, so he said he knew the heart of a stranger, and how much eased his own had been, while travelling, if admitted to the conversation of those he desired to see; therefore he thought his obligation to strangers, was more than bare civility, it was a piece of religious charity in him.

He had for almost forty years, laboured under such a feebleness of body, and such lowness
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of strength and spirits, that it will appear a surprising thing to imagine, how it was possible for him to read, to meditate, to try experiments, and to write as he did. He bore all his infirmities, and some sharp pains, with the decency and submission that became a Christian and a philosopher. He had about him all that unaffected neglect of pomp in clothes, lodging, furniture and equipage, which agreed with his grave and serious course of life. He was advised to a very ungrateful simplicity of diet; which by all appearance was that which preserved him so long beyond all mens expectation; this he observed so strictly, that in a course of above thirty years, he neither ate nor drank to gratify the varieties of appetite, but merely to support nature; and was so regular in it, that he never once transgressed the rule, measure, and kind that was prescribed him. He had a feebleness in his sight; his eyes were so well used by him, that it will be easily imagined he was very tender of them, and very apprehensive of such distempers as might affect them. He did also imagine, that if sickness obliged him to ly long a-bed, it might raise the pains of the stone in him to a degree that was above his weak strength to bear; so that he feared that his last minutes might be too hard for him; and this was the root of all the caution and apprehension that he was observed to live in. But as to life itself, he had the just indifferance to it, and the weariness of it that became so true a Christi-

an. I mention these the rather, that I may have occasion to shew the goodness of God to him, in the two things that he feared ; for his sight began not to grow dim above four hours before he died ; and when death came upon him, he had not been above three hours a-bed, before it made an end of him, with so little uneasiness, that it was plain the light went out, merely for want of oil to maintain the flame.

BUT I have looked too early to this conclusion of his life, yet before I can come at it, I find there is still much in my way. His charity to those that were in want, and his bounty to all learned men, that were put to wrestle with difficulties, were so very extraordinary, and so many did partake of them, that I may spend little time on this article. Great sums went easily from him, without the partialities of sect, country, or relations ; for he considered himself as a part of the human nature, and as a debtor to the whole race of men. He took care to do this so secretly, that even those who knew all his other concerns, could never find out what he did that way ; and indeed he was so strict to our Saviour's precept, that except the persons themselves, or some one whom he trusted to convey it to them, no-body ever knew how that great share of his estate, which went away invisibly, was distributed ; even he himself kept no account of it, for that he thought might fall into other hands. I speak upon full knowledge on this article, because I had the honour
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to be often made use of by him in it. If those that have fled hither from the persecutions in *France*, or from the calamities of *Ireland*, feel a sensible sinking of their secret supplies, with which they were often furnished, without knowing from whence they came, they will conclude that they have lost not only a purse, but an estate that went so very liberally among them, that I have reason to say, that for some years his charity went beyond a thousand pound a-year.

H^{ERRE} I thought to have gone to another head, but the relation he had, both in nature and grace, in living and dying, in friendship, and a likeness of soul to another person, forces me for a little while to change my subject. I have been restrain'd from it by some of her relations; but since I was not so by herself, I must give a little vent to nature and to friendship; to a long acquaintance, and a vast esteem. His sister and he were pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided; for as he lived with her above forty years, so he did not out-live her above a week. Both died from the same cause, Nature being quite spent in both. She lived the longest on the publick scene, she made the greatest figure in all the revolutions of these kingdoms for above fifty years, of any woman of our age. She imployed it all for doing good to others, in which she laid out her time, her interest, and her estate, with the greatest zeal and the most success that I have e-

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ver known. She was indefatigable as well as dextrous in it : and as her great understanding, and the vast esteem she was in, made all persons in their several turns of greatness, desire and value her friendship ; so she gave herself a clear title to imploy her interest with them for the service of others, by this that she never made any use of it to any end or design of her own. She was contented with what she had ; and tho' she was twice stript of it, she never moved on her own account, but was the general intercessor for all persons of merit, or in want : This had in her the better grace, and was both more Christian and more effectual, because it was not limited within any narrow compass of parties or relations. When any party was down, she had credit and zeal enough to serve them, and she employed that so effectually, that in the next turn she had a new stock of credit, which she laid out wholly in that labour of love, in which she spent her life : and tho' some particular opinions might shut her up in a divided communion, yet her soul was never of a party : she divided her charities and friendships both, her esteem as well as her bounty, with the truest regard to merit, and her own obligations, without any difference made upon the account of opinion.

SHE had with a vast reach both of knowledge and apprehensions, an universal affability and easiness of access, a humility that descended to the meanest persons and concerns, an obliging

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kindness and readiness to advise those who had no occasion for any further assistance from her ; and with all these, and many more excellent qualities, she had the deepest sense of religion, and the most constant turning of her thoughts and discourses that way, that has been perhaps in our age. Such a *sister* became such a *brother* ; and it was but suitable to both their characters, that they should have improved the relation under which they were born, to the more exalted and endearing one of *Friend*. At any time a nation may very ill spare one such ; but for both to go at once, and at such a time, is too melancholy a thought ; and notwithstanding the decline of their age, and the waste of their strength, yet it has too much of cloud in it, to bear the being long dwelt on.

You have thus far seen, in a very few hints, the several sorts and instances of goodness that appeared in this life, which has now its period ; that, which gives value and lustre to them all was, that whatever he might be in the fight of men, how pure and spotless soever, those who knew him the best, have reason to conclude, that he was much more so in the fight of God ; for they had often occasions to discover new instances of goodness in him ; and no secret ill inclinations did at any time shew themselves. He affected nothing that was solemn or supercilious. He used no methods to make multitudes run after him, or depend upon him. It never appeared that there was any thing hid under all this appearance

appearance of goodness, that was not truly so. He hid both his piety and charity all he could. He lived in the due methods of civility, and would never assume the authority which all the world was ready to pay him. He spoke of the government even in times which he disliked, and upon occasions which he spared not to condemn, with an exactness of respect. He allowed himself a great deal of decent cheerfulness, so that he had nothing of the moroseness, to which philosophers think they have some right; nor of the affectations which men of an extraordinary pitch of devotion go into, sometimes, without being well aware of them. He was, in a word, plainly and sincerely in the sight of God, as well as in the view of men, *a good man even one of a thousand.*

THAT which comes next to be considered, is the share that this *good man* had in those gifts of God, *wisdom, knowledge and joy.* If I should speak of these, with the copiousness which the subject affords, I should go too far even for your patience, tho' I have reason to believe it would hold out very long on this occasion. I will only name things which may be enlarged on more fully in another way. He had too unblemished a candor to be capable of those arts and practices that a false and deceitful world may call wisdom. He could neither lie nor equivocate; but he could well be silent, and by practising that much, he covered himself upon many uneasy occasions. He made true judgments of men and

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things. His advices and opinions were solid and found; and if caution and modesty gave too strong a bias, his invention was fruitful to suggest good expedients. He had great notions of what human nature might be brought to; but since he saw mankind was not capable of them, he withdrew himself early from affairs and courts, notwithstanding the distinction with which he was always treated by our late Princes. But he had the principles of an Englishman, as well as of a Protestant, too deep in him to be corrupted or cheated out of them; and in these he studied to fortify all that conversed much with him. He had a very particular sagacity in observing what men were fit for; and had so vast a scheme of different performances, that he could soon furnish every man with work that had leisure and capacity for it; and as soon as he saw him engaged in it, then a handsom present was made to enable him to go on with it.

His knowledge was of so vast an extent, that if it were not for the variety of vouchers in their several sorts, I should be afraid to say all I know. He carried the study of the Hebrew very far into the Rabbinical writings, and the other Oriental languages. He had read so much of the Fathers, that he had formed out of it a clear judgment of all the eminent ones. He had read a vast deal on the Scriptures, and had gone very nicely through the whole controversies of religion; and was a true master in the whole body of divinity. He run the whole compass

pass of the mathematical sciences ; and tho' he did not set himself to spring new game, yet he knew even the abstrusest parts of Geometry. Geography in the several parts of it, that related to navigation or travelling, history, and books of travels were his diversions. He went very nicely through all the parts of physick, only the tenderness of his nature made him less able to endure the exactness of anatomical dissections, especially of living animals, tho' he knew these to be the most instructing : but for the history of nature, ancient and modern, of the productions of all countries, of the virtues and improvements of plants, of ores and minerals, and all the varieties that are in them in different climates ; He was by much, by very much, the readiest and the perfectest I ever knew, in the greatest compass, and with the truest exactness. This put him in the way of making all that vast variety of experiments, beyond any man, as far as we know, that ever lived. And in these, as he made a great progress in new discoveries, so he used so nice a strictness, and delivered them with so scrupulous a truth, that all who have examined them, have found how safely the World may depend upon them. But his peculiar and favourite study, was chymistry ; in which he engaged with none of those ravenous and ambitious designs, that draw many into them. His design was only to find out nature, to see into what principles things might be resolved, and of what they were compounded, and to prepare
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good medicaments for the bodies of men. He spent neither his time nor fortune upon the vain pursuits of high promises and pretensions. He always kept himself within the compass that his estate might well bear: And as he made chymistry much the better for his dealing in it, so he never made himself either the worse or the poorer for it. It was a charity to others, as well as an entertainment to himself, for the produce of it was distributed by his his sister, and others, into whose hands he put it. I will not here amuse you with a list of his astonishing knowledge, or of his great performances this way. They are highly valued all the world over, and his name is every where mentioned with most particular characters of respect. I will conclude this article with this, in which I appeal to all competent judges, that few men, if any, have been known to have made so great a compass, and to have been so exact in all the parts of it as he was.

As for joy, he had indeed nothing of frolick and levity in him, he had no relish for the idle and extravagant madness of the men of pleasure; he did not waste his time, nor dissipate his spirits into foolish mirth, but he possessed his own soul in patience, full of that solid joy which his goodness as well as his knowledge afforded him: He who had neither designs nor passions, was capable of little trouble from any concerns of his own: He had about him all the tenderness of good nature, as well as all the softness of friendship

friendship, these gave him a large share of other mens concerns ; for he had a quick sense of the miseries of mankind. He had also a feeble body, which needed to be look'd to the more, because his mind went faster than that his body could keep pace with it ; yet his great thoughts of God, and his contemplation of his works, were to him sources of joy, which could never be exhausted. The sense of his own integrity, and of the good he found it did, afforded him the truest of all pleasures, since they gave him the certain prospect of that fulness of joy, in the sight of which he lived so long, and in the possession of which he now lives, and shall live for ever ; and this spent and exhausted body shall then put on a new form, and be made a fit dwelling for that pure and exalted mind in the final restitution. I pass over his death, I looked at it some time ago, but I cannot bring down my mind from the elevating thoughts that do now arise into that depressing one of his death ; I must look beyond it into the regions of light and glory, where he now dwells.

THE only thought that is now before me, is to triumph on the behalf of religion, to make our due boast of it, and to be lifted up (I had almost said proud) upon this occasion : how divine and how pure a thing must that religion be in itself, which produced so long a series of great effects, thorow the whole course of this shining life ? What a thing would mankind become if we had many such ? And how little need would
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there be of many books writ for the truth and excellency of our religion, if we had more such arguments as this one life has produced? Such single instances have great force in them; but when they are so very single, they lose much of their strength by this, that they are ascribed to singularity, and something particular in a man's humour and inclinations, that makes him rise above common measures. It were a monopoly for any family or sort of men to ingross to themselves the honour which arises from the memory of so great a man. It is a common not to be inclosed. It is large enough to make a whole nation, as well as the age he lived in, look big, and be happy: But above all it gives a new strength, as well as it sets a new pattern to all that are sincerely zealous for their religion. It shews them in the simplest and most convincing of all arguments, what the human nature is capable of, and what the Christian religion can add to it, how far it can both exalt and reward it. I do not say that every one is capable of all he grew to; I am very sensible that few are; nor is every one under equal obligations: for the service of the universe, there must be a vast diversity in mens tempers, there being so great a variety of necessities to be answered by them: but every man in every employment, and of every size of soul, is capable of being in some degrees good in the sight of God; and all such shall receive proportioned degrees of wisdom, knowledge and joy; even tho' neither their
goodness

goodness nor these accessions to it, rise up to the measure of him who was a while among us, indeed *one of a thousand*, and is now but one of those *ten thousand times ten thousand* that are about the throne, where he is singing that song which was his great entertainment here, as it is his now endless joy there: *Great and marvellous are thy Works, O Lord God Almighty; and just and true are thy ways, O King of saints.* To follow him in the like exercises here, is the sure way to be admitted to join with him in those above; to which God of his infinite mercy bring us all in due time, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen, Amen.*

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

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